

# National Strategy Against Antisemitism

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## Combating Antisemitism

A summary of results and a record of additional future commitments

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# Quotations

“...a policy of zero tolerance against antisemitism is observed in Hungarian political life...”<sup>1</sup>

**Viktor Orbán**, Prime Minister

“Hungary has some fantastic achievements in the fight against racism and antisemitism, and our government has excelled in this in particular.”

“Such acts are prosecuted under law and are also disallowed in political discourse.”<sup>2</sup>

**Viktor Orbán**, Prime Minister

“I am convinced that Hungary is a country where people will never again be discriminated against or humiliated because of their origin or religion. We protect each and every citizen of this country and will not compromise on that. We do not tolerate and will condemn the stigmatisation of any minority and all forms of antisemitism.”<sup>3</sup>

**Viktor Orbán**, Prime Minister

“Hungary can protect Hungarian Jewry today, we protect human dignity, guarantee freedom of religion and support all efforts taken by the Jewry in Hungary to preserve and strengthen its cultural identity. This is self-evident, given our moral obligations.”<sup>4</sup>

**Gergely Gulyás**, Minister of Prime Minister’s Office

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<sup>1</sup> <https://2015-2022.miniszterelnok.hu/zero-tolerancia-van-az-antiszemitzmussal-szemben/> (22/02/2023)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ma.hu/belfold/378736/Orban\\_Magyarország\\_fantasztikus\\_eredmenyeket\\_ert\\_el\\_a\\_rasszizmus\\_es\\_a\\_z\\_antiszemitzmus\\_elleni\\_kuzdelemben](http://www.ma.hu/belfold/378736/Orban_Magyarország_fantasztikus_eredmenyeket_ert_el_a_rasszizmus_es_a_z_antiszemitzmus_elleni_kuzdelemben) (22/02/2023)

<sup>3</sup> <https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/hu/miniszterelnokseg/hirek/orban-viktor-nyilatkozata-a-holokauszt-nemzetkozi-emleknapjan>

<sup>4</sup> Delivered as a video message on 27 January 2021 at the International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration organised by the Holocaust Documentation Centre (HDKE).

“It is true that the Holocaust took place in Western civilisation, but there is reason to doubt that it stemmed from Western civilisation. In fact, the Holocaust, not unlike the Gulag, resulted precisely from the denial and betrayal of the ideals of Western civilisation based on Judeo-Christian foundations.”<sup>5</sup>

**Gergely Gulyás**, Minister of Prime Minister’s Office

“The Holocaust devastated not only the Hungarian Jewry, but also Hungarian society as a whole, by inflicting an incalculable loss. We must not remain indifferent to that fact of history. We can only combat ignorance by facing and naming the crimes, and by saying no to antisemitism. However, there is neither human existence, nor culture without remembrance. The responsibility of the state is huge in securing the opportunity to discover the past for everyone, and in taking a firm stance against all forms of antisemitism.”<sup>6</sup>

**Vince Szalay-Bobrovniczky**, Deputy State Secretary, state executive responsible for the affairs of the Jewish community

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<sup>5</sup> Speech delivered on 27 January 2021 to commemorate the International Holocaust Remembrance Day <https://gulyasgergely.hu/aktualis/post/51> (22/02/2023)

<sup>6</sup> Delivered at a memorial ceremony held at HDKE on 16 April 2021, the Day of Remembrance for Hungarian Victims of the Holocaust.

## Drafters

Hungary attaches great importance to ensuring that Jewish communities, which have flourished in our country for centuries, receive all the state support they are entitled to, and maintaining permanent constructive dialogue and effective cooperation between the parties.

On the government side, the tasks related to the above have been carried out since 2018 by Vince Szalay-Bobrovniczky, Deputy State Secretary for Civil and Social Relations of the Prime Minister's Office. He relies on the Department of Social Affairs in carrying out the professional tasks connected to the preservation of the Jewish cultural heritage, maintaining relations with Jewish communities, taking national and international action against antisemitism, and implementing religious, social, cultural and civic aid for Jewish communities.

The drafting of the national strategy against antisemitism is yet another milestone the Government of Hungary has reached as part of its long-standing efforts through extensive cooperation across ministries, including the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Culture and Innovation.

However, the development of the strategy had to be based on consensus, with the involvement of Hungary's established Jewish churches and Jewish organisations. Acting on behalf of the Jewish communities, the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation, the Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary, the Hungarian Jewish Heritage Public Foundation, the Holocaust Documentation Center and Memorial Collection Public Foundation, the March of the Living Foundation and the Hungarian Jewish Prayer Association contributed ideas and recommendations to creating the strategy.

# Introduction

Hungary has the largest Jewish community in Central and Eastern Europe; their headcount can only be determined approximately. There are several reasons for this, including first of all the lack of census data about the denominational and ethnic composition of the total population of Hungary since 1949, and the use of vastly different methods for data collection in the period between 1945 and 1949.<sup>7</sup>

Based on the data recorded during the 2022 census, 7,635 individuals claimed to belong to the Jewish denomination in 2022<sup>8</sup>, compared to 10,965 claiming to be of Jewish religion in 2011.<sup>9</sup> Given the particularly sensitive nature of declaring affiliation to a religion or denomination for the Jewry of Hungary, the actual number of individuals belonging to a Jewish denomination may be higher. A 2017 sociological study put the number of the Hungarian Jewry between 58,936 and 110,697 in 2015 based on maternal descent.<sup>10</sup> Estimates of the present-day situation also vary, but calculations of the World Jewish Congress suggest that the current number of people of Jewish descent in our country is between 75,000 and 100,000.<sup>11</sup> Last September's statistics published by the National Tax and Customs Administration showed that a total of 16,821 persons offered 1% of their taxes to 6 Jewish religious organisations, which shows an increase (from 15,695) since 2022.<sup>12</sup> In 2023, the tax offerings of 1 percent were distributed as follows: MAZSIHISZ: 12,612 persons; EMIH: 2,549 persons; MAOIH: persons; Sim Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation: 530 persons; Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation: 375 persons; Jewish Congregation of Kőszeg: 402 persons.<sup>13</sup> The vast majority of Hungarian Jews live in Budapest, where there are over twenty synagogues operated in line with their original function, and several other Jewish cultural institutions.

As regards the territorial distribution of the Hungarian Jewry, the aforementioned 2017 study showed that 85% of respondents resided in Budapest, 6% lived in county seats, another 6% in other rural towns, while 3% were resident in smaller settlements.<sup>14</sup> Although these data cannot be projected to the population as a whole due to the specificities of the study, they coincide with general estimates suggesting that around 90 percent of the Jewish population live in

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<sup>7</sup> Kovács-Barna, Zsidók és zsidóság Magyarországon 2017-ben (Jews and the Jewry in Hungary in 2017), 12.

<sup>8</sup> <https://nepszamlalas2022.ksh.hu/adatbazis>

<sup>9</sup> <https://nepszamlalas2022.ksh.hu/adatbazis>

<sup>10</sup> Kovács-Barna, Zsidók és zsidóság Magyarországon 2017-ben (Jews and the Jewry in Hungary in 2017), 13.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/HU>

<sup>12</sup> [https://nav.gov.hu/ado/szja1\\_1/kimutatasok\\_elszamosok/technikai-szammal-rendelkezo/felajanlasban-reszesultek-2022/kozlemeny-a-2022.-evben-szja-1-os-felajanlasban-reszesult-technikai-szamos-kedvezmenyezettekrol](https://nav.gov.hu/ado/szja1_1/kimutatasok_elszamosok/technikai-szammal-rendelkezo/felajanlasban-reszesultek-2022/kozlemeny-a-2022.-evben-szja-1-os-felajanlasban-reszesult-technikai-szamos-kedvezmenyezettekrol) [corrected on the basis of 31 January 2023 data]

<sup>13</sup> [https://nav.gov.hu/ado/szja1\\_1/kimutatasok\\_elszamosok/technikai-szammal-rendelkezo/felajanlasban-reszesultek-2023/](https://nav.gov.hu/ado/szja1_1/kimutatasok_elszamosok/technikai-szammal-rendelkezo/felajanlasban-reszesultek-2023/)

<sup>14</sup> Kovács-Barna, Zsidók és zsidóság Magyarországon 2017-ben (Jews and the Jewry in Hungary in 2017), 26.



Budapest.<sup>15</sup> Counting close to a thousand members, the largest Jewish congregation outside Budapest is that of Debrecen.<sup>16</sup> The Jewish population of Miskolc, Szeged and Nyíregyháza are also active practitioners of their religion and culture, and almost all of the larger towns in Hungary have active organised Jewish congregations.

The Holocaust has completely overwritten both the history and the demography of the Jewry of Hungary. Based on the census of 1941, around 725,000 Jews lived in Hungary, including the territories re-annexed at the time, but the total Jewish population may have approximated 800,000, including those who had left Judaism by conversion.

Close to two-thirds of the Hungarian Jewry were killed between 1941 and 1945. Although precise figures are not available, researchers agree that the lives of the majority of the Jewry were lost in that period, and quantitative estimates establish the number of victims at 500-600 thousand.

It is certain that 427,000 Jews were deported from the countryside in a few months during the mass deportations starting in spring 1944, with 50,000 additional Jews displaced from Budapest after the failed attempt to exit the war and the Arrow Cross' seizure of power.<sup>17</sup> 82 percent of Hungarian Jews today have a close relative killed in the Holocaust.<sup>18</sup> One out of ten victims of the Holocaust and one out of three victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau were Hungarians.

The National Strategy Against Antisemitism serves as both guidance and a practical tool for combating exclusion, safeguarding our shared history and traditions, and properly honouring the memory of several hundred thousand compatriots deported and killed during the Shoah.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://eurojewcong.org/communities/hungary/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.dzsh.hu/hu>

<sup>17</sup> <https://mult-kor.hu/a-gettositas-kezdetenek-evfordulojan-emlekezunk-meg-a-holokauszt-magyarorszagialdozatairol-20220416>

<sup>18</sup> Kovács-Barna, *Zsidók és zsidóság Magyarországon 2017-ben* (Jews and the Jewry in Hungary in 2017), 106.

# **I. Preventing and combating all forms of antisemitism**

## 1. Adopting and applying the IHRA definition

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (hereinafter: IHRA) is an intergovernmental organisation called to existence in 1998 with the mandate to unite governments and experts to strengthen, advance and promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance to prevent the conditions precedent to genocide from ever emerging again. The IHRA is the only international organization dedicated exclusively to addressing Holocaust-related issues and challenges, with equal weight given to governmental, expert and civil society involvement. The 31 member states of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance adopted the non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism on 26 May 2016: **“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”**<sup>19</sup>

Hungary held the IHRA presidency for a year starting March 2015. The focal points of the program of the presidency included combating antisemitism, supporting Holocaust education, issues related to Romani genocide, and increasing the international weight of the IHRA. As one of the major achievements of the Hungarian presidency, the IHRA managed to lift the ban of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR<sup>20</sup>) on accessing Holocaust related documents.<sup>21</sup>

On 18 February 2019, the Government of Hungary adopted Government Decision 1039/2019 (18 February) on *promoting the application of the definition of antisemitism developed in the framework of the International Holocaust Remembrance Association*.<sup>22</sup> The Decision reaffirms that the Government attaches high priority to raising the broadest possible public awareness of the history and traditions of Judaism, as it is convinced that the dissemination of such knowledge provides opportunities to drive back antisemitism and the related negative views, and acts as a reminder of the government's declared policy of zero tolerance towards antisemitic phenomena and manifestations, in order to protect the dignity and security of our Jewish compatriots. The Government concurred that the antisemitism definition developed in the framework of the IHRA provides appropriate guidance in the fight against antisemitism.

Section 3 of the Government Decision calls upon the Minister of Justice to include the Freedom of Expression Thematic Working Group of the Human Rights Working Group in examining the option to apply the antisemitism definition developed in the framework of the IHRA, and to submit a report to the Government. Moreover, Section 4 Government Decision

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/hu/resources/working-definitions-charters/az-antisemitizmus-ihra-altal-elfogadott-munkadefinicioja>

<sup>20</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)

<sup>21</sup> Holocaust 70: Magyar Holocaust Emlékév 2014-2015 (Holocaust 70: Memorial Year of the Holocaust in Hungary) ; HDKE 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Hungarian Gazette 23, 18 February 2019 <http://www.kozlonyok.hu/nkonline/MKPPDF/hiteles/MK19023.pdf>

calls upon the Minister of Justice to examine the option to integrate the antisemitism definition developed in the framework of the International Holocaust Remembrance Association and the Government Decision into IM Decree 5/1991 (4 April) [of the Minister of Justice], and to submit a report about the same to the Government.

The Thematic Working Group met on 26 March 2019 to carry out the task set out in Section 3 of the Government Decision, and formulated a number of recommendations during its session. The Thematic Working Group recoded its conclusions in a comprehensive report, and presented it to the Government for further deliberation. The report covers the examination of the acts on the criminal code, civil rights and media law, and concludes that the legislation provides adequate securities for combating hate speech and hate crime. Nevertheless, additional steps can be taken to raise the awareness of and to train legal professionals and practitioners. The report urges the National Media and Infocommunications Authority to examine the option to keep a register of racist and xenophobic content aimed at enticing hatred, and invites the Media Council and its professionally affiliated self-regulatory bodies to consider the definition. Furthermore, it recommends examining what steps could be taken at European level to further the potential application of the definition. The Government adopted the report about this topic in May 2019.

### **PLEDGE**

The Government of Hungary supports and encourages local governments, institutions, social and sports organisations to adopt and apply the IHRA definition.

## 2. Zero Tolerance Against Antisemitism

The Government and the Jewish denominations of Hungary embarked on an efficient dialogue during the past decade. That has greatly contributed to resolving the social tensions associated with antisemitism. One of the key components of this process involved the establishment of the Jewish Community Roundtable with representatives of the government and all of the Jewish communities of Hungary (including three Jewish religious communities operating as established churches, two additional Jewish communities that have in the meantime registered as churches, as well as Jewish associations and foundations). The professionals of the Jewish Roundtable participated in the revision of textbooks, and contributed to the proper presentation of Jewish history and culture in schoolbooks.

Hungary has declared zero tolerance toward antisemitism and is fully committed to guaranteeing the security of compatriot Hungarian Jews.

Both the Hungarian government and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán have confirmed repeatedly that zero tolerance toward antisemitism is in place in Hungarian political life, or as the Prime Minister put it “we shall never tolerate any antisemitic approach to any problem”.<sup>23</sup>

In a public exchange of correspondence with Ronald S. Lauder, President of the Jewish World Congress, the Prime Minister explained that “Hungary and its government protects European Jewish communities when it prevents the uncontrolled entry of migrants into the European Union. Our policy has moral and theoretical reasons, and also serves the idea of Jewish-Christian coexistence, in which we continue to believe with conviction.”

### **PLEDGE**

The principle of zero tolerance is a fundamental tenet of the strife against the discrimination of and any attack against Jews, around which an efficient set of tools have been designed in recent years. Nevertheless, the results achieved so far are not exclusively attributable to the determination and efforts of the Government of Hungary. They are also the outcome of the dialogue conducted with the representatives of Jewish communities.

The pillar supporting the national strategy against antisemitism is also the product of a constructive cooperation of this nature, since the heads of Jewish churches, organisations and institutions in Hungary had the opportunity to express their positions to the representatives of the Government of Hungary even in the early stages of these efforts.

We are confident that, together with Hungary’s Jewish community, we can continue our journey to take a resolute stand against antisemitism and ensure a vibrant future for Jewish life. Taking the foregoing into account, Hungary commits to holding at least two forums a year with the representatives of Jewish churches and organisations to address the issues concerning the Jewish community, in order to continue the structured dialogue between Jewish communities and the Government of Hungary.

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<sup>23</sup> Orbán in Israel: Zero tolerance is in place against antisemitism

[https://index.hu/belfold/2018/07/19/orban\\_izraelben\\_zero\\_tolerancia\\_van\\_az\\_antiszemizmus\\_ellen/](https://index.hu/belfold/2018/07/19/orban_izraelben_zero_tolerancia_van_az_antiszemizmus_ellen/)  
(16/11/2022)

We classify antisemitic content communicated by politicians and academics as antisemitism in public life. While these instances may not typically meet the legal definition of hate speech, they are nonetheless offensive to the Jewish community.<sup>24</sup> Antisemitism in public life has a variety of distinguishable forms: statements and symbolic acts of concern due to historical credibility; the appearance and manifestation of far-right ideas, individuals and organisations in public life; the emergence of conspiracy theories in public life; expressions of hostility to Israel, and other forms of public antisemitism.<sup>25</sup>

No form of antisemitism in public life is compatible with the principle of zero tolerance toward antisemitism declared and consistently practised by the Government of Hungary. Consequently, the Government of Hungary undertakes to mobilise all possible means to combat latent and public antisemitism.

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<sup>24</sup> Félix, Antiszemita incidensek: Jelentés (Antisemitic Incidents: A Report) 2019-2020, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Félix, Antiszemita incidensek: Jelentés (Antisemitic Incidents: A Report) 2019-2020, 9.

### 3. Pledges presented at the Malmö International Forum

Hungary considers it an important task to use all possible means to fight antisemitism also in the international arena. At the International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism held in Malmö on 13 October 2021, our country agreed to the following:

- Hungary will seek to curb the antisemitic groups of the BDS movement, which is seeking to boycott Israel, and to prevent them from receiving European Union funds.
- Hungary will undertake to fight restrictions and bans on Jewish religious practices and traditions in order to safeguard Jewish freedom.
- Hungary has adopted and applies the IHRA's definition of antisemitism, and undertakes to further accelerate and deepen its implementation.
- In the framework of cross-border Hungarian-Serbian cooperation, a Holocaust memorial site will be established in the town of Bor in Serbia.
- Hungary will continue its program of renovating synagogues and cemeteries.

The pledges show that the support provided by Hungary is not limited to Israel, as our country has taken specific steps to protect and preserve Jewish life and culture. In this light, Hungary was the only country to take a firm stand in international forums in response to the European Court of Justice upholding the ban on kosher slaughter.

Hungary is proud of its Jewish-Christian roots and is committed to protecting freedom of religion. As millennial traditions such as kosher slaughter and circumcision are fundamental to Jewish religious life, the Hungarian Government will continue to stand up against any attempt to ban these religious practices in any way, in order to ensure full religious freedom.

## 4. International human rights and the legal system of Hungary, and international treaties on human rights

Article Q of the Fundamental Law of Hungary declares:

*(2) In order to comply with its obligations under international law, Hungary shall ensure conformity with international law.*

*(3) Hungary shall accept the generally recognised rules of international law. Other sources of international law shall become part of the Hungarian legal system by publication in rules of law.*

The earlier justification attached by the submitting party to the initial legislative proposal about the Fundamental Law asserts that the Proposal lays down the requirement of consistency between international legal rules binding on Hungary and the country's legal system, in order to ensure good faith implementation of obligations under international law.<sup>26</sup>

### **The development of human rights**

The UN Charter was the first to enshrine human rights as a fundamental international norm, and the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948 to establish broad international protection.

Next, the specialisation of human rights documents started. The most influential international conventions to date have been reached in the following areas:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

Simultaneously with the universal conventions listed above, international cooperation also started at regional level for the protection of human rights. The following regional documents should be highlighted:

- European Convention on Human Rights (1950)
- European Social Charter (1961, revised in 1997)

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<sup>26</sup> Initial justification submitted by the proposing party to the proposed legislation on the Fundamental Law of Hungary (T/2627). The justification concerns Article P.



- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000)
- American Convention on Human Rights (1969)
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)

Hungary was the first country from Central and Eastern Europe to acquire Council of Europe membership on 6 November 1990. As our country was also among the first apply for accession to the European Union, the transposition of international legal standards into Hungarian law started earlier than in the other countries of the region. To facilitate the accession, fundamental human rights were enshrined in the constitution and separate laws were enacted to declare such rights. The Constitutional Court's interpretation function provided the framework for the practical application of a variety of rules governing human rights.

The Fundamental Law of Hungary, which entered into force on 1 January 2012, addresses the affirmation of fundamental human rights in two separate parts, specifically the chapters on National Avowal and Freedom and Responsibility.<sup>27</sup>

## **The UN and human rights**

### **UN human rights forums**

One of the three pillars of the UN involves upholding and respecting human rights. The supreme human rights body of the UN is the 47-member Human Rights Council (HRC; in Hungarian: Emberi Jogi Tanács – EJT). The Council has three sessions a year in Geneva (for 4 weeks in March, 3 weeks in June and 3 weeks in September). The HRC regularly places the most serious crises on its agenda, including the examination of severe human rights violations in the country concerned. The Council also deals with thematic human rights issues like the freedom of expression, assembly and religion; the rights of children and persons with disabilities; democracy and the rule of law, prevention of genocide; racism; the use of the capital punishment; the situation of minorities; the situation of human rights defenders; and the relationship between counter-terrorism and human rights. Hungary handles HRC decisions on judicial independence and government reprisals against rights defenders. Hungary participated as a member of the HRC twice since its establishment, in the 2009-2012 and the 2017-2019 cycles.

The work of the sessions of the HRC is complemented by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, which lasts for a fortnight three times a year and creates a framework for the regular review of the human rights situation and the performance of each UN Member State. While the HRC is in session, each member state may put forward recommendations for the member state under scrutiny, which will report the implementation of such recommendations at the next review in five years' time. The first Universal Periodic Review of human rights in Hungary took place in May 2011. The second UPR was held in March 2016, with preparations assisted by the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) established

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<sup>27</sup> <https://emberijogok.kormany.hu/emberi-jogok-kialakulasa>

upon a UPR recommendation. The next review procedure was conducted from November 2021 onwards.

The HRC annual report on human rights is submitted to the UN General Assembly in New York via the Third Committee, where human rights issues are allocated. The Third Committee of the General Assembly scrutinises similar issues as the HRC, but in contrast with its 47 members, there are 193 UN Member States with voting rights in New York, which allows for a different approach.<sup>28</sup>

### **The activities of the Human Rights Working Group**

The Government made arrangements in its decision<sup>29</sup> in February 2012 to set up a Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) with the main mandate to monitor the enforcement of human rights in Hungary, consult non-governmental, interest representation and professional organisations and constitutional bodies, and also to facilitate professional communication on upholding human rights in Hungary.

The HRWG also monitors the implementation of recommendations made, adopted or partially approved at the sessions of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council in respect of Hungary. Additionally, the HRWG oversees, and monitors the implementation of and tasks relating to upholding human rights, as such arise from conventions and treaties adopted in the framework of the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), EU membership and other international commitments. The HRWG is chaired by the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, with the State Secretary for Care Policy of the Ministry of Interior acting as co-chair.

At its formative meeting in 2012, the HRWG decided to set up the Human Rights Roundtable, which currently has 133 NGOs as members, with 61 civil and professional organisations participating as invitees in the efforts of the thematic working groups. Currently, the Roundtable operates 8 thematic working groups, with each group dedicated separately to addressing the legal and practical problems of and policy recommendations made by vulnerable groups of society.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://ensz.kormany.hu/az-ensz-es-az-emberi-jogok>

<sup>29</sup> Government Decision 1039/2012 (22 February) on the Human Rights Working Group

The following thematic working groups are operated in the framework of the Human Rights Roundtable:

<b>Thematic Working Group</b>	<b>President</b>
Thematic Working Group on the Rights of the Child	State Secretary for Families, Ministry of Culture and Innovation
Thematic Working Group on the Rights of the Elderly	State Secretary for Families, Ministry of Culture and Innovation
Thematic Working Group on Equal Rights	Parliamentary State Secretary, Ministry of Justice
Thematic Working Group on Asylum	State Secretary for Law Enforcement, Ministry of Interior
Thematic Working Group on National Minorities	Deputy State Secretary for Church and National Minority Relations, Prime Minister's Office
Thematic Working Group on Women's Rights	State Secretary for Families, Ministry of Culture and Innovation
Thematic Working Group on Roma Issues	State Secretary for Care Policy, Ministry of Interior
Thematic Working Group on Social Affairs	State Secretary for Care Policy, Ministry of Interior

The thematic working groups have met 177 times since 2013.

## 5. Documents of the European Union relating to fight against antisemitism

### **Council Declaration on the fight against antisemitism and the development of a common security approach to better protect Jewish communities and institutions in Europe - Council conclusion (6 December 2018)**

On 6 December 2018, the Council approved a declaration on the fight against antisemitism and the development of a common security approach to better protect Jewish communities and institutions in Europe. In its declaration, the Council acknowledges that Jewish communities in some EU countries feel particularly vulnerable to terrorist attacks, following an increase in violent incidents in recent years. It notes that anti-Semitic hatred remains widespread, as confirmed by the 2018 Fundamental Rights Agency report on antisemitism.

The declaration invites member states to adopt and implement a holistic strategy to prevent and fight all forms of antisemitism, as part of their strategies on preventing racism, xenophobia, radicalisation and violent extremism. It calls on member states to increase their efforts to ensure security for Jewish communities, institutions and citizens.<sup>30</sup>

### **Council declaration on fighting antisemitism (2 December 2020)**

On 2 December 2020, the Council approved a declaration on mainstreaming the fight against antisemitism across policy areas. In this declaration, the Council emphasises that the fight against antisemitism is a cross-cutting issue involving various levels of government and policies at local, national and European level. Awareness of antisemitism therefore needs to be raised across policy areas and responsibilities. The EU member states have agreed to mainstream the prevention and countering of antisemitism in all its forms. The Council expresses its concern at the increase in threats to Jewish people in Europe, and the resurgence of conspiracy myths, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the increase in antisemitic incidents and hate crime. Education about the Holocaust, antisemitism and Jewish life remains one of the most important tools in preventing antisemitic prejudices. Sharing good practices to foster media literacy and awareness of conspiracy myths is also very important.<sup>31</sup>

### **Commission presents first-ever EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (5 October 2021)**

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<sup>30</sup> Fight against antisemitism: Council declaration – 6 December 2018

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/12/06/fight-against-antisemitism-council-declaration/> (24/04/2024)

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15213-2018-INIT/en/pdf> (24/04/2024)

<sup>31</sup> Antisemitism: Council declaration on fighting antisemitism – 2 December 2020

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/12/02/antisemitism-council-declaration-on-fighting-antisemitism/> (24/04/2024)

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/47065/st13637-en20.pdf> (24/04/2024)

The Commission presented the first-ever EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life on 5 October 2021. The strategy comprises EU actions arranged in three pillars:

- preventing all forms of antisemitism;
- protecting and fostering Jewish life;
- encouraging education, research and Holocaust remembrance.

The strategy sets out measures focusing on increasing cooperation with IT companies to reduce the online presence of antisemitism, increasing the effectiveness of protecting public places and places of worship, and setting up a European centre for researching present-day antisemitism and a network of sites where the Holocaust happened. These measures are complemented by the EU's international efforts at taking the lead on fighting antisemitism globally.

Some of the key measures in the Strategy include:

- **Preventing and combating all forms of antisemitism:** Nine out of ten Jews perceive that antisemitism has increased in their country, with 85% considering it a serious problem. To address this, the Commission will mobilise EU funds and support Member States in designing and implementing their national strategies. The Commission will support the creation of a Europe-wide network of trusted whistleblowers and Jewish organisations to remove illegal online hate speech. It will also support the development of narratives countering antisemitic content online. The Commission will cooperate with industry and IT companies to prevent the illegal display and selling of Nazi-related symbols, memorabilia and literature online.
- **Protecting and fostering Jewish life in the EU:** 38% of Jews have considered emigrating because they do not feel safe as Jews in the EU. To ensure that Jews feel safe and can participate fully in European life, the Commission will provide EU funding to better protect public spaces and places of worship. The next call for proposals will be published in 2022, making available €24 million. Member States are also encouraged to make use of Europol's support regarding counterterrorism activities, both online and offline. To foster Jewish life, the Commission will take measures to safeguard Jewish heritage and raise awareness around Jewish life, culture and traditions.
- **Education, research and Holocaust remembrance:** Currently, one European in 20 has never heard of the Holocaust. To keep the memory alive, the Commission will support the creation of a network of places where the Holocaust happened, but which are not always known, for instance hiding places or shooting grounds. The Commission will also support a new network of Young European Ambassadors to promote remembrance of the Holocaust. With EU funding, the Commission will support the creation of a European research hub on contemporary antisemitism and Jewish life, in cooperation with Member States and the research community. To highlight Jewish heritage, the Commission will invite cities applying for the title of

European Capital of Culture to address the history of their minorities, including Jewish community history.

The EU will use all available tools to call on partner countries to combat antisemitism in the EU neighbourhood and beyond, including through cooperation with international organisations. It will ensure that EU external funds may not be misallocated to activities that incite hatred and violence, including against Jewish people. The EU will strengthen EU-Israel cooperation in the fight against antisemitism and promote the revitalisation of Jewish heritage worldwide.<sup>32</sup>

### **Council conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism (2 March 2022)**

On 2 March 2022, the Council adopted conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism. In these conclusions, the Council deplores the alarming rise in racist and antisemitic incidents in EU member states. It invites member states to develop action plans and strategies by the end of 2022, implementing the 2020 EU anti-racism action plan and the 2021 EU strategy on combating antisemitism. The Council highlights the importance of **education and training**, calling on member states to raise awareness among their population of the fight against racism and antisemitism and uphold their duty to remember the victims of racist and antisemitic violence. It also calls on member states to promote research and education on Jewish life, antisemitism and the Holocaust, as well as racism and slavery. The conclusions invite member states to urge media, social networks, as well as the technology and communications sectors to apply codes of conduct agreed at European level, and to adopt solutions to rapidly detect, assess and remove **illegal online hate speech**. Member states should also strengthen their ability to prosecute illegal online hate crime and hate speech, including by establishing online monitoring centres and platforms where people can report hateful content. When it comes to **reporting and investigation**, the conclusions also call on member states to encourage victims and witnesses of racist and antisemitic incidents to report those incidents in order to ensure that such reports are investigated, and to offer assistance, including psychological, social and material support, where necessary. Member states are also invited to include content on combating discrimination in training for law enforcement and judicial authorities, and to develop best practices for identifying and supporting victims. The conclusions call on member states to ensure that national coordinators, public bodies, social partners and civil society organisations **work closely together** to develop preventive measures and evaluate their effectiveness. Member states are also asked to consider developing a **common methodology** for quantifying and qualifying racial and antisemitic incidents, and comparing them over time and between member states.

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<sup>32</sup> Commission presents first-ever EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life – 5 October 2021

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_4990](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_4990) (24/04/2024)

EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030)

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0615> (24/04/2024)

Finally, the Council invites the **Commission to support**, including financially, member states, public bodies and institutions, local authorities and civil society organisations in the fight against racism and antisemitism.<sup>33</sup>

### **Vienna Declaration on enhancing cooperation in fighting antisemitism and encouraging the reporting of antisemitic incidents (18 May 2022)**

In the spirit of the Council declarations of 18 December 2018 and 2 December 2020 and the Council conclusions of 4 March 2022, the Special Envoys and Coordinators combating antisemitism, and the members of the European Commission Working Group on the Implementation of the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life, convened on 18 2022 in Vienna to discuss what could be done to encourage and facilitate the reporting and to improve the registration of antisemitic incidents. The participants acknowledge existing practices in registering antisemitic incidents and take note of the resources relevant to collecting data on antisemitism developed by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

The participants emphasise the need to improve data collection methods. It is essential to encourage victims to report hate crime, and, importantly, to strengthen cooperation between law enforcement agencies, Jewish communities and civil society organisations. The participants agree to further promote the use of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, which can serve as a basis to collect comparable data on antisemitic incidents. Moreover, the participants acknowledge the importance to foster bi- and multilateral cooperation as well as international cooperation. They aim to develop a common methodology for quantifying and qualifying antisemitic incidents. They expressed their agreement to establish the *European Conference on Antisemitism* as an informal, open working group. The participants agree to regularly report to the European Commission's Working Group on the Implementation of the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life, and to continue cooperating with each other.<sup>34</sup>

### **Second European Conference on Antisemitism (17-18 April 2023)**

The Second European Conference on Antisemitism was held in Vienna on 17-18 April 2023. The participants included the representatives of EU Member State that have either signed or supported the Vienna Declaration on enhancing cooperation in fighting antisemitism and encouraging reporting of antisemitic incidents. Several experts of hate crime were in

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<sup>33</sup> Council conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism – 22 March 2022

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/04/council-adopts-conclusions-on-combating-racism-and-antisemitism/> (24/04/2024)

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6406-2022-REV-1/en/pdf> (24/04/2024)

<sup>34</sup> Vienna Declaration on enhancing cooperation in fighting antisemitism and encouraging reporting of antisemitic incidents – 18 May 2022

[https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:2321cd70-e395-44f8-982f-842d6ef9b103/vienna\\_declaration.pdf](https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:2321cd70-e395-44f8-982f-842d6ef9b103/vienna_declaration.pdf) (24/04/2024)

attendance, including the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) special envoys and coordinators for combating antisemitism and representatives of the Jewish World Congress, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The conference focussed on the implementation of the provisions of the Vienna Declaration.

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<sup>35</sup>Second European Conference on Antisemitism – 17-18 April 2023

<https://www.vindobona.org/article/european-anti-semitism-conference-in-vienna> (24/04/2024)



## 6. The system of legislation on criminal law in Hungary

It is necessary, first of all, to review the system of legislation in Hungary's criminal law, and to introduce the major provisions. From the perspective of criminal law, non-violent, inciting forms of conduct motivated by racism, antisemitism or other discrimination include first of all the use of symbols of despotism, incitement against a community, and the open denial of crimes committed by Nazi and Communist regimes, each of which is a criminal offence.

The symbols listed among the facts specified in Section 335 of Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code (hereinafter: Btk.) for the criminal offence involving the use of symbols of despotism are associated with ideas and events accompanying the forceful seizure and dictatorial maintenance of power and may evoke fear, painful memories or even the sense of being threatened in certain groups of the public. The Criminal Code provides an exhaustive or closed list of these symbols, including the swastika, the insignia of the SS, the arrow cross, the five-pointed red star, as well as the sickle and hammer. The objects of criminal offence are the materialised forms of the symbols listed in the statutory definition, which also includes objects bearing pictorial representations of these symbols on their surface. The conducts involved in the commission of this offence include the dissemination, use in front of the public at large or public display of authoritarian symbols.

It is important to underline that any of the conducts involved in the commission of this offence is punishable only in case if it is objectively capable of breaching public peace and thereby satisfies the requirements laid down by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the Constitutional Court. It is also not immaterial that this criminal offence is subsidiary in nature, and can only be established if a more serious offence has not been committed. It could also qualify as a more serious offence and, considering all of the circumstances of the case, it could be tantamount to the facts involved in incitement against a community (Section 332 of the Btk.), open denial of Nazi crimes and communist crimes (Section 333 of the Btk.) and even violence against a member of the community (Section 216 of the Btk.).

As the facts underlying incitement against a community as defined in (Section 332 of) the Btk. are tantamount to a crime of endangerment, no hatred or violence should actually materialise or gain expression in other persons; the threat of that occurring is sufficient for establishing that a criminal offence has occurred. Where a perpetrator is aware that the actions performed in front of the public at large are objectively suitable for instigating hatred, the perpetrator has committed the criminal offence.

Although incitement against a community can only be committed deliberately, it is enough for the perpetrator to be aware that his/her expressions in front of the public at large (as it is defined in Section 459, Point 22 of the Btk., which also includes committing the offence by means of publication on an electronic communications network) are targeted at a group of protected persons, are suitable for instigating hatred or violence, and the perpetrator's conduct is aimed at inciting hatred or violence, or the perpetrator foresees that hatred or violence

might arise. The law specifies certain societal groups differentiated by gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.

The European Commission contacted the Government of Hungary via the EU Pilot Programme (8186/15/JUST) on 23 December 2015 regarding the transposition into Hungarian law of Council Framework Decision 2008/913/IB of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. Discussions with the Commission led to the modification of the provisions of the Criminal Code at issue, and accordingly the facts of the case specified in Section 332 of the Btk. contains an explicit reference to instigating “violence” as well as hatred. Accordingly, incitement to hatred does not automatically mean a direct threat of violence or a realistic possibility of a specific injury resulting from violence; this latter case is covered by the term “incitement to violence”. Furthermore, the legal definition now expressly refers not only to the example of a “group” but also to “a member of a group”, in full compliance with the relevant provision of the Framework Decision. The new text of Section 332 of the Btk. took effect on 28 October 2016, eight days after the promulgation of the modifying act (namely Act CIII of 2016 on the amendment of acts regulating EU and international cooperation in criminal matters, and certain aspects of criminal law for legal harmonisation).

As regards the criminal offence of openly denying the crimes of national socialist and communist regimes (Section 333 of the Btk.), a declaratory judgement of the Constitutional Court should be underlined as it asserts that the denial of national socialist and communist crimes is to be treated as an abuse of the freedom of expression, and the communications to be sanctioned run so sharply contrary to general social convictions and they infringe upon the sense of justice and the dignity of victims to a degree that can lead to the disturbance of public peace by eliciting public revolt and shocking other persons. Taking the requirements of international criminal law into account, the Btk. identifies as punishable not only denying, doubting and downgrading such crimes, but also any conduct that “attempts to justify” the crimes in question.

Violent actions motivated by racism and xenophobia, including violence against a member of a community, are also punishable under (Section 216 of) the Criminal Code. Paragraph (1) of the facts needs to be highlighted in that it identifies as punishable the display of any non-violent, but apparently anti-social behaviour against others for being part (whether in fact or under presumption) of a certain group of society. However, it is not a criterion in the Btk. that the perpetrator should display apparently anti-social behaviour against another person, and it is sufficient for the perpetrator to display behaviour motivated by a racist cause, defined in the facts, against a thing (such as a car parked in the street, etc.). Being apparently anti-social means an outright disregard for the rules of coexistence in a community. Apparently anti-social conduct should also be such that can cause panic, but it is not necessary for panic to actually occur for the criminal offence to materialise.

The facts involved in unlawful activities concerning the pursuit of public security (Section 352 of the Btk.) should also be underlined, as this provision that can also be connected to violent or non-violent hate crimes. As part of combating what was termed as “uninformed

crime”, which appeared in Hungary in 2011, the relevant legislation, including the Criminal Code, was amended already at that time. The main purpose of the amendments was to prevent civil organisations from organising under the pretence of official capacity without statutory authorisation and state control. Illegally organising activities relating to public security in connection with acts of this nature is qualified as punishable under the Criminal Code. Organising activities relating to public security without statutory authorisation can become unlawful through the organisation of activities pursuing to maintain public security or public policy or any activities pretending to do so, provided that this single act can constitute the commission of one of the hate crimes listed above, once all of the conditions of the case are taken into account.

It deserves emphasis in respect of hate crimes that the criminal conduct motivated by racism or hate based on some other negative discrimination always qualifies as an offence committed with malice aforethought or with malicious motive. There are several felonies listed in the Special Part of the Criminal Code (such as manslaughter, physical assault and defamation) where offences committed with malice aforethought or with malicious motive are treated as qualified cases and are punishable more seriously. In case a perpetrator committing a felony where malice aforethought or malicious motive is not a qualifying circumstance, the courts may, upon proper substantiation, evaluate hatred based on discrimination as an aggravating circumstance from the perspective of determining its punishment.

## 7. Online criminal offences instigating hatred

It deserves emphasis that the Criminal Code has introduced the rendering of data published by electronic means irreversibly inaccessible as a new measure (in Section 77 of the Btk.) in connection with online criminal offences instigating hatred. An order to render data inaccessible is aimed primarily at removing any infringing content, which will be performed by the provider of hosting services based on a court order. If content removal fails, the court will issue an order to block access (with such “blocking” implemented by intermediary web service providers)

Upon introducing the rendering of data published by electronic means irreversibly inaccessible as a new measure, it was also necessary to complement the criminal procedure with a new coercive measure which, not unlike the measure discussed above, is aimed at interrupting criminal offences that can be committed using a computer system and at preventing access to forbidden data content.

Once criminal proceedings start, a coercive measure aimed at rendering electronic data temporarily inaccessible may be ordered, as provided in Sections 335-336 and 338 of Act XC of 2017 on Criminal Procedure (hereinafter: Be.). As a general condition, such a coercive measure may be ordered where proceedings are conducted regarding criminal offences subject to public prosecution, with regard to which rendering electronic data permanently inaccessible may be ordered, and doing so is necessary to interrupt the criminal offence. Electronic data may be rendered temporarily inaccessible in two ways, by removing the infringing website, or by blocking. This coercive measure is executed primarily to remove content, and execution by way of blocking is permissible only in the case of the most serious criminal offences (such as terrorist acts and child pornography). In the case of online hate crime, protection against hate speech and the freedom of expression, as well as the presumption of innocence, are balanced by ensuring that online content may only be removed and may not be blocked while the criminal procedure is pending (i.e., before a final and binding judgement is reached in the case). An additional safeguard from the perspective of the freedom of expression is provided by the requirement to render electronic data temporarily inaccessible in a manner to allow restoration of the original situation with a view to facilitating data recovery once the coercive measure is lifted or terminates during the subsequent stages of the procedure or when the proceedings are closed in merit and no measures are ordered.

The Be. specifies exactly the scope of providers obliged to execute coercive measures (hosting service providers as defined in Act CVIII of 2001 on certain aspects of electronic commerce and information society services), and ensures that the temporary prevention of access to electronic data will be given effect even if identifying the removing entity is impossible or involved disproportional difficulty, or no result can be expected from sending a letter rogatory to a foreign authority for legal assistance concerning the temporary removal of electronic data, or sending such a request would involve disproportional difficulty.

Providers obliged to remove electronic data temporarily have one working day to do so after the communication of the relevant decision, which shall be arranged immediately after the

decision. The decision shall be served on the person entitled to dispose over the electronic data concerned if that person's identity and contact details are known from data accumulated during the proceeding.

The court shall issue an order to restore removed electronic data if the grounds for removal no longer exist, or in case the court proceedings terminate without an order to render data irreversibly inaccessible. The court may impose a disciplinary fine for the failure to perform an obligation to temporarily remove or to restore electronic data. The amount of the disciplinary fine levied on a natural person may range from HUF 20,000 to HUF 1,500,000 (roughly EUR 55 - 4,100).

Another safeguard involves the duty of the provider obliged to render electronic data temporarily inaccessible to inform users of the legal grounds for removing, or preventing access to content.

It needs emphasis that the Be. seeks to increase the flexibility of regulatory actions and therefore offers the option to remove offensive data without a coercive measure taken by an authority, by authorising the proceeding body to demand voluntary data removal before taking a coercive measure. It is important to note that acting upon such a demand is not compulsory.

If the data content is at the disposal of a service provider located in a foreign country, international legal assistance in criminal matters shall be used to initiate the removal of offensive content. If such a letter rogatory fails to accomplish the removal, the court will order to block the content in question, whereby users in Hungary will no longer have access to the online content. Nevertheless, blocking content does not offer perfect protection because it can be technically circumvented, which is why international cooperation is definitely preferable for more successful action.

In order to ensure the availability of digital evidence, the Be. provides a detailed definition (in Sections 315-317) of the rules of seizing, and ordering the preservation of data recorded by information technology or other electronic means. As part of the efforts to counter IT crime, investigating authorities and justice administration bodies must be granted investigative powers and instruments that promote the efficient detection of internet crimes and acts harming IT systems and the swift collection of evidence.

Sections 315-317 of the Be. provide a detailed definition of the rules of seizing, and ordering the preservation of data recorded by information technology or other electronic means. Ordering preservation allows the courts, prosecutors and investigating authorities to order the preservation of data in unaltered form to safeguard the success of investigations by preventing the controller of the data from interfering. Ordering preservation is a temporary coercive measure of assurance that restricts the right of disposal of the data holder and controller over such data temporarily (preventing any modification or deletion of the data specified in the coercive measure), but (in contrast with seizure) it does not deprive controllers of the right to hold data. Courts, prosecutors and investigating authorities may issue orders to preserve in unaltered form both data qualifying as evidence and data recorded by means of information technology, provided the latter are required to detect means of evidence and the identity and abode of suspects.

The provision that requires that the party obliged to preserve data shall be notified of the completion of the criminal proceedings is an important safeguard.

As regards the duty of internet platforms to report crime, the Act on the Code of Criminal Procedure grants everyone the right to report crimes subject to public prosecution, including hate crime. Members of an authority, including members of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority, are obliged to report criminal offences subject to public prosecution that they become aware of as part of their material competence. Reports to the authorities need to identify the means of proof, and it must be simultaneously ensured that the evidence substantiating the offence and the means of proof, including seizable electronic data, is preserved..

Web hosting service providers shall be accountable for hosting (storing) illegal content and for any misuse of their platforms. Article 17 of Act CIV of 2010 on the Freedom of the Press and the Fundamental Rules of Media Content provides that “media content may not incite hatred or violence against any member of any nation, community, national, ethnic, linguistic or other minority or any majority as well as any church or religious group because of belonging to that community.”

Act CLXXXV of 2010 on media services and on the mass media (hereinafter: Media Act) provides that the Media Council or the Office of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority may sanction parties for infringing media regulations, and may take measures in proportion to the severity of the infringement.

All in all, Hungary has comprehensive legal regulations and background offering protection against online acts aimed at inciting hatred. It is worth highlighting that the decisions of the Constitutional Court (hereinafter: CC) on criminal matters frequently focus on factual situations covered by the chapter on criminal offences against public peace, such as incitement against a community or the use of symbols of despotism, which allows us to assert that the degree to which criminal law restricts rights and freedoms is criticised most heavily in relation to the freedom of expression. Decision 1214/B/1990 of the CC states that the restriction of rights imposed by punishment needs to meet the principles of proportionality, necessity and *ultima ratio*, also in terms of the degree of such restrictions. In line with the requirement that criminal law should comply with the principles of *ultima ratio* and subsidiarity, the legislator is obliged not to manage social problems and conflicts primarily by means of criminal law, and to apply specific penalties of a scope that is absolutely necessary for protecting society. Criminal law as an ultimate means should only be resorted to if no other means can be applied. Criminal law is only legitimate when applied as a last resort to the most serious infringements. They may be applied when the penalties available in other branches of law remain ineffective. [Constitutional Court Decisions 30/1992 (26 May) and 18/2000 (6 June)].

More recently, the solution to problems relating in particular to online crime have necessitated the search mainly for technical and forensic tools and political consensus, rather than the amendment of the rules of criminal law, as a primary approach.

The efficiency of countering online crime could be improved by training investigators, prosecutors and judges and increasing their responsiveness to the problem, as well as by educating the organs concerned, the staff of authorities, and society as a whole, with monuments designed to maintain remembrance, with memorial days, and by sensitizing society at large; so as to prevent the emergence of hateful prejudices.

**PLEDGE**

Hungary's Government will broaden the legal framework for making inaccessible all hate crime-related online content that violates the Criminal Code, particularly on social media platforms, and will review the options for building capacity for and developing the tools of enforcement.

## **II. Protecting and fostering Jewish life in Hungary**



## 1. Law enforcement action against antisemitism

### **Training at law enforcement organs, community work**

The e-learning course ‘Antisemitism and hate crimes’ is one of the mandatory professional upgrading courses the Minister of Interior has ordered the (professional and law enforcement administration) staff of prisons to complete.

Moreover, there are two qualified further training courses available on the portal of Public Service Staff Development Directorate of the Ministry of Interior (PSSDD):

- About Judaism and the Holocaust (elective e-learning course).
- Classroom further training on Judaism and the Holocaust.

The professional upgrade portal of the PSSDD will post more further training courses relating to the topic so as to upgrade the knowledge of staff members and strengthen their resistance to prejudices.

The religious practices and spiritual care of prisoners of the Israelite faith are provided by a full-time rabbi with national competence, who, in addition to dealing with the prisoners concerned, places emphasis on raising the receptiveness of prisoners and staff of other faiths to the problem, and on increasing their knowledge of Judaism.

The National Penal Institution of Central Transdanubia regularly attends to and maintains the Jewish cemetery in Kápolnásnyék as part of the social reparation work of prisoners.

Neither local nor international organisations have contacted the National Headquarters of the Prison Service with complaints about antisemitic treatment or communication.

Specific training on hate crime is crucial for local and regional authorities, as it helps them develop the skills needed to identify, record, investigate, prosecute and sanction hate crime, and ensure fair and appropriate treatment of victims. The main factors contributing to the desired objective include strong leadership, cross-cultural knowledge and skills of police officers, integration of hate crime training, involvement of EU funds, the option to receive training in national languages, adaptation to police needs, presentation of specific cases, and the combination of different learning and training methods.

The Hungarian Police has participated in preparing an online education module in the framework of European Union application project entitled “Facing all the facts - building capacity to monitor hate crime and hate speech through online training”, coordinated by the Faculty of Law Enforcement of the National Public Service University and the Brussels based CEJI (A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe). The project is an innovative programme and network designed to tackle hate crime and hate speech in Europe. It also seeks to improve the detection and registration of and the responses to hate crime and hate speech at national level and beyond, through fostering cooperation between civil society and public authorities.

Several noteworthy examples of training in Member States were presented at the meeting of the European Commission's Working Group on Hate Crime Training and National Law Enforcement Capacity-Building on 20 January 2022.

CEPOL (the European Union's Agency for Law Enforcement Training) also has a number of useful and related training courses, and if these are available in Hungarian, they will be more widely applicable.

## **PLEDGE**

Hungary's Government keeps improving the curricula of the school-based educational and in-service training programmes of law enforcement agencies related to Jewish communities and antisemitism.

## **Prosecuting hate crime**

In detecting and investigating criminal offences, the criminal justice function relies on prejudice indicators in order to eradicate, and provide an effective, professional and lawful law enforcement response to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Drawn up using an international model, its list specifies objective facts and circumstances indicating whether or not a criminal offence has been motivated, entirely or in part, by prejudice.

Uniform, efficient and professional responses by law enforcement to hate crimes justified the issuance of a protocol of standard procedure, known as Order 30/2019 (18 July) by the National Police Headquarters on the implementation of police tasks related to the handling of hate crime [hereinafter: ORFK Order 30/2019 (18 July)], which relies on the above-mentioned prejudice indicators during the detection and investigation of hate crimes.

ORFK Order 30/2019 (18 July) requires police officers responding to a criminal offence to evaluate whether or not the perpetrator was motivated by prejudice. If the suspicion arises that a criminal offence can be traced back to prejudice as a motif, all the necessary measures need to be taken to effectively investigate such motif.

Where primary data establish the suspicion of a hate crime, the criminal proceedings should pay particular attention to communicating a message to the victim that hate crimes will always be investigated, and where the act underlying the proceedings is disclosed to the public, the same message shall also be communicated to groups that share the features of the victim which form the subject matter of the perpetrator's prejudice.

Where an incident is suspected to have been motivated by hatred, the police officer on duty shall immediately take or initiate the measures within his/her competence in order to neutralise potentially threatening situations and to prevent the commission of prejudice driven criminal offences.

To facilitate the recognition of and proper law enforcement response to infringements, all police departments had to appoint a mentor and communicate the name and contact details of that person to the personnel of the department. County (and Budapest) police headquarters must employ at least one regional hate crime specialist, and there is one officer in charge of managing this specialisation at the Criminal Directorate of the National Police Headquarters.

The Criminal Directorate of the National Police Headquarters established this special line of duty in January 2012 to improve the effectiveness of countering hate crime.

At the national level, Order 30/2019 (18 July) by the National Police Headquarters requires officers appointed to be in charge of a single line of duty to monitor and immediately classify offences under criminal law upon detecting unrecognised instances of hate crime; to monitor media coverage of hate crimes or hate-motivated incidents; to monitor the activities of organised hate groups and their members, and to take the necessary measures if a violation is suspected; to professionally manage and oversee criminal proceedings against hate crime; to ensure that information and manuals on hate crime are available on the police intranet site; to involve the law enforcement arm of the police in organising annual training for specialist regional officers in charge of investigating hate crime.

The Police have developed the following definition of hate crime: *violation of freedom of conscience and religion, violence against a member of a community, incitement against a community, public denial of the crimes of national socialist or communist regimes, defamation of national symbols, use of symbols of despotism, and any crime against a person or property where the cause underlying the selection of the victim, or the place or the object of the offence, is the perceived or actual association or connection of or support by the victim, or the association of the place or the object, with a particular group, which is based on an identity trait of the group shared by all of its members, including the perceived or actual race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, gender identity, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar identity trait.*

Law enforcement and criminal justice personnel received training about the List of Prejudice Indicators and its use, as well as the characteristics of hate crimes, in 2019.

The list of bias indicators, including explanations and examples to help identify hate crimes, has been distributed to all police departments.

Topics such as expected behaviour, the importance of objectivity, the protocol to be followed, the prohibition of discrimination, and the significance of unbiased police action are regularly covered in the briefings of field officers.

As an independent line of duty, the specialised hate crime unit cooperates with the Working Group Against Hate Crimes, which was established in 2012 by Hungarian civil society organisations to work together to fight hate crime more effectively. The cooperation unfolds through case studies conducted once or twice a year.

Established in 2012 and recognised subsequently by a UN audit, the hate crime line of duty was complemented in 2019.

Reviews AJB-1433/2022 and AJB-1434/2022 conducted by the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights with competence for the protection of minorities in Hungary called the attention of the Police to the proper application of the definition of the facts associated with incitement against a community as part of increasing the efficiency of countering hate crime.

To ensure the uniform application of law, the Police asked the Office of the Prosecutor General to communicate its position, including practical examples. Position paper

NF.3082/2022/6-II was delivered to the Police on 27 October 2022 and was published on the Police intranet site.

### **Prosecuting online hate speech**

In recent years, the Police has investigated a number of crimes committed in the online space, including incitement to hatred and terrorism, with some of the investigations still in progress. The Police gives high priority to preventing, countering and detecting criminal offences of this nature.

The issue of online hatred is an extreme challenge for the Police. For example, requests for data hosted on servers in foreign countries are frequently unfulfilled during the investigation of criminal offences committed on websites, social networking sites and video-sharing platforms.

### **Police action to guarantee security**

On Jewish holidays, the Police provides the necessary, recurrent presence in places of Israeli relevance or those typically visited by Israeli citizens, and takes the appropriate measures without delay upon becoming aware of any preparations for an illegal act or other threat.

Moreover, the staff of the Diplomatic Security Division of the Personal Protection Department of the Directorate for the Protection of Persons and Property of the Rapid Response and Special Police Services (DPPP) provide temporary guarding duties to the Ambassador of Israel. Consequently, members of staff responsible for personal guarding duties are present in large numbers at the Israeli Embassy and at the Ambassador's residence. Staff members are aware that Israeli citizens are exposed to threats globally.

Due to the threats and dangers surrounding the ambassador, a high level of vigilance and caution is required during the performance of protection duties.

Extremist organisations and groups are known to attract persons they think are subject to economic or political exclusion, and those with a strong sense of disillusionment with society. These groups offer a "sense of belonging" to, and strengthen the self-esteem of people who join them.

The authorities need to analyse the networks of extremist groups. It is necessary to be constantly aware of the relationship between the online activities of such groups and the events or incidents they plan or have performed.

Extremist (antisemitic) groups in Hungary are short of members, and therefore do not represent a hazard. Nevertheless, law enforcement organs monitor their activities.

### **Cooperation with Europol**

The Bomb Disposal Service of the DPPP has received assistance from foreign countries and international organisations, which they can put to good use in detection and disarming as part of their CBRN-E (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear substances and explosives) activities.

The National Bureau of Investigation of the Rapid Response and Special Police Services (RRSPS NBI) have contacted the specialised units of the Europol in almost each case right

after ordering the investigation of terrorist acts and criminal offences motivated by antisemitism. In doing so, they not only used the ESN (European Security Network) secure information exchange networking application, SIENA, which is a system provided by Europol, but also participated in online conference meetings with Europol. Furthermore, they engaged in several discussions with peer organisations in other nations to exchange experiences and obtain information directly online and offline.

### **EU-wide cooperation for a common platform against antisemitism**

RRSPS NBI also maintains contacts with the law enforcement organs of other nations in an attempt to prevent, counter and detect criminal offences driven by antisemitism. In doing so, a staff member of the RRSPS NBI participated in a conference held in May 2022 to discuss international trends and experiences relating to criminal offences motivated by antisemitism.

### **Collection of hate crime statistics**

The uniform system of criminal statistics for investigating authorities and prosecution offices (Hungarian acronym: ENYÜBS) collects data pertaining to criminal offences reported to the authorities.

The collection of hate crime statistics was improved substantially in July 2018. Two new fields were added to the data collection form, including a yes-no question on whether the offence qualifies as hate crime. If it does, another question is asked about the protected identity trait (race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, other). This is a major step forward compared to the previous system.

ENYÜBS stores data about the motivation for and the nature of the hate crime only in case the perpetrator is known, which is why it is only possible to establish the number of offences. It also means that a criminal offence can only be recorded as a hate crime if the perpetrator is known.

It is important to note that answers in the affirmative in this field of the form refer to both actual and assumed membership of a community group, if that has been a factor in the perpetration of the crime. The answer has to be negative in all other cases.

If the answer in this field is affirmative, the question about the “Nature of the hatred” needs to be completed as well, using the provided glossary. The glossary lists religious groups as groups of people with identical religious conviction. They do not need to form a religious community with self-governance to practice their religion.

Pursuant to a ministerial decision, the Counter Terrorism Centre (Hungarian acronym: TEK) was charged with the duty to collect data about organisations ready to use violence in Hungary. Any information of that nature obtained by other law enforcement organisations must be forwarded TEK without delay.

The courts immediately notify the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (hereinafter: the Authority) by electronic means about any order to render electronic data temporarily inaccessible, and the Authority organises and oversees the execution of such orders.

The Authority applies the provisions of Sections 92/A, 159/B and 159/C of Act of 2003 for the purposes of organising and controlling the execution of coercive measures ordered by the courts in criminal matters to temporarily or irreversibly prevent access to electronic data, as well as the execution orders issued by an authority defined in separate act to render electronic data inaccessible. To that end, the Authority operates a central database of decisions to render electronic data inaccessible (Hungarian acronym: KEHTA)

## **Police training on non-discrimination**

The quality of technical materials and presentations and their broad spectrum contribute greatly to increasing staff affinity with social issues and to the choice of appropriate communication, and hence to promoting a positive image of the police.

The implementation of the mandatory e-learning training course 3/K/2022/87 on “*Antisemitism and Hate Crimes*” is in progress at the Law Enforcement Management Training, Professional Upgrading and Examinations portal of the Ministry of Interior in the framework of the central training ordered by the Minister of Interior.

In addition to the above mandatory course, two upgrading courses, “E-learning upgrading course on Judaism and the Holocaust” and “Classroom training on Judaism and the Holocaust” are available for professional law enforcement officers to help the staff become familiar with fundamental Jewish values, acts and achievements, as well as the inexcusable tragedy of the Holocaust. Professional upgrading courses help officers perform their daily police work through greater awareness of Jewish daily life and Jewish holidays.

As regards non-discrimination, a qualified classroom further training course entitled “Recognising and Managing Bias” is available to the police officers in leadership positions. The course is designed to help mid-line and top-line managers employed by organisations of the Ministry of Interior recognise and manage their own prejudices, if any, to be able to work in the spirit of non-discrimination.

Police staff can participate in conflict management training courses (such as “*Workdays without Conflict for Law Enforcement Officers Protecting Public Order and Border Management Officers*”, “*How to communicate without bias?*”) in accordance with an annual training plan approved by the leadership of county (and Budapest) police headquarters. The knowledge imparted via training courses contributes to implementing non-judgemental measures in a professional manner.

Briefings and staff meetings provide instruction about Order 27/2011 (30 December) by the National Police Headquarters on police action in multicultural environments and the related methodological guidelines. The handbook on police action relating to incidents motivated by hatred and bias is also covered.

Instruction about the list of prejudice indicators attached to Order 30/2019 (18 July) by the National Police Headquarters, and about the characteristics of hate crime, is given in the same manner on a repetitive basis.

The Budapest Metropolitan Police has held several training courses relating to the subject matter of antisemitism in recent years.

According to Order 22/2011 (21 October) by the National Police Headquarters on the cooperation and communication between the organ established to perform general police duties and Roma minority self-governments, a variety of presentations have been held for service commanders and policemen on duty in public spaces about conflict management and in an effort to increase sensitivity toward the topic. Service commanders claiming to be members of a minority on duty at the Police Departments of Districts VIII, X, XX-XXIII and XXI of the Budapest Metropolitan Police have participated in an affinity training course organised about this topic by the Central Minority Liaison Working Group.

The International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) is an institution with the mission to establish and develop a framework for cooperation of law enforcement organs in the United States of America and various countries globally, including some of the member countries of with the European Union. ILEA seeks to support the joint fight against cross-border organised crime, and to promote democratic governance, as well as social, political and economic stability.

ILEA Budapest hosts several special courses, the topics of which are determined based on feedback received from countries participating in ILEA programs. The training courses offer an excellent opportunity to visiting course participants from various countries to exchange experiences and establish contacts. The annual timetable of courses and the training topics covered is determined by the competent bodies of the United States of America.

The curriculum regularly includes a training course on “Countering Bias-motivated Crimes (Hate Crimes)”, which focuses primarily detecting and investigating offences motivated by religious persecution. A country from among the member states of the EU, including Hungary on several occasions, is always invited to each of these courses. Moreover, the topic of hate crime is also covered by other courses on investigating violent criminal acts.

The Hungarian National Office of the European Union's Law Enforcement Training Agency (CEPOL MNI) provides training to law enforcement officials throughout the EU and beyond. Their activities strengthen internal security inside the EU, and contribute to combating terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, and other direct threats endangering citizens and European lifestyle. CEPOL keeps assessing training needs in cooperation with member states and other EU institutions, thereby contributing to giving effect to EU priorities concerning security.

Most of the training courses are obviously professional by nature, but police ethics and the enforcement of fundamental rights, along with the composition of a training portfolio to meet such criteria, have recently been given special emphasis. As a member of the CEPOL Management Board, Hungary has ongoing commitments to integrate emerging forms of training concerning this topic into the CEPOL portfolio of courses.

## **Prevention of antisemitic hate crime and victim support**

The provision of special treatment in criminal proceedings is regulated by Chapter XIV of the Be. Special treatment means the collection of rules that depart from general provisions to facilitate, support or protect the exercise of rights relating to criminal proceedings. They are designed to ensure that individuals of what are known as vulnerable groups can exercise their rights the same way as their non-disadvantaged counterparts regardless of their procedural position.

Special treatment is declared and the application of the measures needed is introduced on the basis of case by case evaluation, during which the authority has the option to decide in its discretion over and above applying compulsory elements. Pursuant to Section 8(1) of IM Decree 12/2018 (12 June) [of the Minister of Justice] (hereinafter IM Decree) on the rules governing certain actions during and the persons participating in criminal proceedings, investigating authorities use the form attached in Annex as specified in Section 9(4) for case-by-case assessment.

The Be. provides that special treatment may be declared upon a motion by the persons concerned, or *ex officio*.

The fundamental tenet of the system laid out in the Be. in relation to persons requiring special treatment is that the organs involved should make an initial decision in each case where the need for individual assessment arises, and that decision should be based on a uniform system of criteria. Where the court, the prosecution service or the investigating authority observes that unique and special needs arise in relation to a person subject to their criminal proceedings, a decision shall be made first of all about whether or not the person concerned requires special treatment. Once that is decided, the system of instruments designed to manage the unique needs of the person concerned opens up. The scope of persons concerned include first of all aggrieved parties and witnesses, but certain measures are also applicable to defendants, defence counsels, experts, consultants, parties with pecuniary interest, as well as any aide to defendants or witnesses, and other persons with regard to those listed above pursuant to Section 96 of the Be.

With a view to the interests of the proceeding, the courts, the prosecution service and the investigating authority facilitate the exercising of rights and the performance of obligations of persons requiring special treatment, and ensure that such persons are treated with tolerance, so that such concerned persons may exercise their rights laid down in this Act and perform their obligations despite any obstacles that may arise from the circumstances underlying their special treatment. The above authorities also grant enhanced protection to the personal data underlying the special treatment of persons concerned, in particular data concerning their health. The organ proceeding in the case facilitates the use of an aide by persons concerned, takes into account the personal needs of the persons concerned in the course of planning and performing procedural acts, and carries out each procedural act that requires the presence of persons concerned without delay and, if possible, without repetition.

With a view to the interests of the proceeding, the courts, the prosecution service and the investigating authority facilitate the exercising of rights and the performance of obligations of



persons requiring special treatment, and ensure that such persons are treated with tolerance, so that the persons concerned may use an aide.

ORFK Order 30/2019 (18 July) provides that in case primary data establish the suspicion of a hate crime, the criminal proceedings should pay particular attention to communicating a message to the victim that hate crimes will always be investigated, and where the act underlying the proceedings is disclosed to the public, the same message shall also be communicated to groups that share the features of the victim which form the subject matter of the perpetrator's prejudice.

The dispatched police officers must communicate with the victims calmly, objectively and in a supportive tone, but always professionally. Police officers may not express personal value judgements regarding the behaviour, culture, origin or community of victims, must refrain from using stereotype words and expressions conveying bias or referring to blaming the victim.

IM Decree 13/2018 (12 June) by the Minister of Justice lays down the rules on setting up, operating and monitoring the use of a room designed for procedural acts necessitating the participation of persons requiring special treatment, as the organ proceeding in the case will perform its procedural act in a room dedicated to or suitable for the purpose, provided that no other ways or measures ensure that the persons concerned can exercise their rights and perform their obligations while they are treated with tolerance.

Each territorial organ has set up special interrogation rooms in its area of territorial jurisdiction, and operate such rooms in line with standard requirements. Investigative bodies without a special interrogation room can use the facilities established in the area of territorial jurisdiction of their county. Several bodies have offices that meet the requirements of the IM Decree and can take voice and video recording during the interrogation of persons requiring special treatment.

The Law Enforcement Directorate of the National Police Headquarters has issued guidelines entitled “Police action related to incidents motivated by hatred or bias” to help local cooperating partners manage planned or ongoing “hate incidents”.

In November 2020, the Law Enforcement Directorate and the Criminal Directorate of the National Police Headquarters published an information booklet entitled “Fight it Together!”, including useful information and helpful advice for hate crime victims. The booklet was produced in 22,000 copies in February 2021.

Examining intersectionality is indispensable from the perspective of identifying victims and for conducting procedures that respect their needs. Adopting an intersectional approach is key to understanding that people's lives are influenced by a range of factors, both beneficial and detrimental. Very often, prejudice-motivated violence and discrimination are complex and multifaceted phenomena, with two or more biases intertwining and each case taking on a unique dimension. Intersectionality can help identify the vulnerability of individuals falling victim to hate crime and the unique needs of persons concerned. Systems of inequality based on other forms of discrimination intersect, creating unique dynamics and effects. All forms of inequality are mutually reinforcing, hence they need to be analysed and addressed

simultaneously to prevent one form of inequality exacerbating another. Intersectionality can increase the risk of victimisation and repeated victimisation, and reduce the likelihood of victims reporting hate incidents.

## 2. Studies and surveys about antisemitism

An important part of the fight against antisemitism is to monitor the occurrence of antisemitic incidents.

### **Monitoring activities of the Action and Protection League**

One of the goals of the Action and Protection League is to raise broader social awareness of antisemitism. As the primary means of doing so, the League continuously monitors hate crimes in public life in a professionally sound manner. No true protection can be provided to Jewish communities or individuals without collecting and analysing information about antisemitic incidents and other offences motivated by hatred.<sup>36</sup>

Founded by the Action and Protection Foundation (TEV), the Brüsszel Intézet (Brussels Institute) monitors antisemitic hate crimes in Hungary in accordance with methods developed and recommended by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), using significant fiscal support granted by the state of Hungary.<sup>37</sup>

TEV publishes the results of its data collection activities in the form of monthly reports, along with a summary of findings published in an annual report.

The reports deal with two forms of behaviour: antisemitic hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents. Both types of behaviour are referred to as "hate incidents" in the reports. The main difference between an antisemitic hate crime and other hate crimes is that the former has an antisemitic motive.<sup>38</sup>

The Government set up a European Action and Protection Network in Government Decision 1623/2018 (29 November) on establishing the Action and Protection League of Europe (APLE), which opened its Brussels Office with the mission of coordinating the fight against antisemitism across the continent.<sup>39</sup>

TEV detected a total of 37 antisemitic hate incidents in Hungary in 2021, including 1 case of attack, 5 cases of vandalism, 2 cases of threat and 29 cases of hate speech. The TEV did not detect any incident of discrimination.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Antisemitic Hate Crime and Incidents in Hungary – 2021 Annual Report*, Action and Protection League, 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Reports*, Brussels Institute, <https://brusszelintezet.hu/kategoria/eves-jelentesek/>.

<sup>38</sup> See: Action and Protection League (footnote 17)

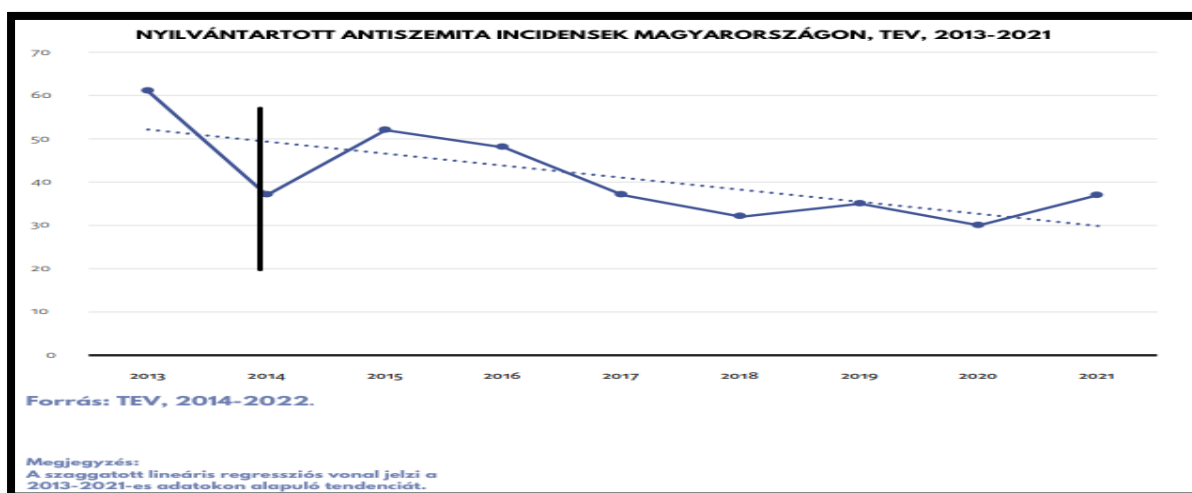
<sup>39</sup> Government Decision 1623/2018 (29 November) on establishing the Action and Protection League of Europe (APLE)

<sup>40</sup> See: Action and Protection League (footnote 17), 4.

<b>A NYILVÁNTARTOTT ANTISZEMITA GYŰLŐLET CSELEKMÉNYEK SZÁMA MAGYARORSZÁGON, TEV, 2013-2021</b>	
<b>Év</b>	<b>Nyilvántartott antiszemita incidensek</b>
2013	61*
2014	37
2015	52
2016	48
2017	37
2018	32
2019	35
2020	30
2021	37

**Forrás: TEV, 2014 - 2022.**

	<b>Registered antisemitic hate incidents in Hungary, TEV, 2021–2021</b>
	<b>Year</b>
	<b>Registered antisemitic incidents</b>
	<b>Source: TEV, 2014-2022</b>



	<b>Registered antisemitic hate incidents in Hungary, TEV, 2013–2021</b>
	<b>Source: TEV, 2014-2022.</b>

	<b>Note: The dashed line of linear regression indicates the trend based on data from 2013 to 2021.</b>
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An examination of the period between 2013 and 2021 shows a declining trend in the number of antisemitic incidents in Hungary, as demonstrated by the two tables above.

The table below comprises the research results of the Action and Protection Foundation in 2022.

	Antisemitic hate incidents detected in 2022					
	Total	Assault	Vandalism	Threat	Hate speech	Discrimination
January	7	0	1	2	4	0
February	1	0	0	0	1	0
March	-	The reports of March and April were merged due to technical reasons.				
April	6	0	1	0	5	0
May	6	0	1	0	4	1
June	2	0	2	0	0	0
July	5	0	2	1	2	0
August	6	0	3	1	2	0
September	2	0	1	0	1	0
October	4	1	1	0	2	0
November	1	0	0	0	0	1
December	5	0	0	0	4	1
Total of the first six months	22	0	5	2	14	1
Annual total	45	1	12	4	25	3

Source: TEV official data provision, 2023.

**Research results of the European Jewish Association**

A two-year study of the Jewry of 12 European countries with a significant Jewish population was presented at the annual conference organised by the European Jewish Association (EJA) in Budapest in June 2022. The study summarised the major surveys conducted in recent years about the life of Jewish communities.

The data collected by the study suggest that the sense of security of the Jewry in Hungary is second only to Denmark among the countries of Europe. Within that, Hungary is ranked first as the country where Jews suffered the fewest antisemitic attacks. Hungary also performed

positively in the study in terms of practicing religion.<sup>41</sup> Summarising the surveys of recent years, the study ranked the activities of European governments, with Hungary ranking second after Italy as regards the living conditions of the Jewry.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Patrik Máté, *Hungary guarantees security for Jewish community*, (in Hungarian) Magyar Nemzet, <https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2022/06/magyarorszag-garantalja-a-zsido-kozosseg-biztonsagat>.

<sup>42</sup> Cnaan Liphshiz, *Which European countries are best for Jews? A new study offers unexpected answers*, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, <https://www.jta.org/2022/06/21/global/which-european-countries-are-best-for-jews-a-new-study-offers-unexpected-answers>.

### 3. The role of Hungary's foreign policy in supporting the fight against antisemitism

One of the most pronounced elements of the foreign policy of Hungary is combating antisemitism, and the targeted manifestation of this goal in our multilateral and bilateral relations. In its national address during the interactive dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief on 10 March 2022, in the 49th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), Hungary stressed that it has declared zero tolerance against antisemitism.

The lesson learnt from the horrors of the Holocaust, which demands the prevention of any such historical atrocity form ever recurring, is one of the fundamental tenets of our support of Israel. Accordingly, Hungary is committed to a balanced approach in respect of Israel. Our position is that the narrative used in international institutions and at UN and EU forums, which shifts all the responsibility on Israel, is unacceptable. Defending its sovereignty and the security of its citizens is Israel's inherent right. As before, we will continue to raise our voice against one-sided and distorting manifestations. Hungary consistently condemns all forms of terrorism. This matter does not allow double standards, and terrorists cannot be compared with Israel's right to self-defence.

At the high-level segment of the UN Human Rights Council, Hungary has spoken out against the biased conduct of the UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry (COI), which is biased against Israel. On the Hungarian side, we expressed our concerns about the Commission of Inquiry (COI) established by the UN Human Rights Council in a national intervention during the session of the Third Committee, and at the 50th session of the HRC we endorsed the joint statement initiated by the US to express concern about the biased operation of the COI.

The Government of Hungary, acting primarily through its role in the organisations of the European Union and the United Nations, will continue to aim in its foreign policy to repress the antisemitic groups of the BDS movement, which has declared boycott against Israel, and to prevent EU and other international funds from being channelled to the movement.

Moreover, the 12th EU-Israel Association Council, the highest political-level meeting to review bilateral relations, convened after a decade of inactivity on 3 October 2022, following Hungary's active mediation efforts. In his speech at the meeting, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid expressed his special thanks for the prominent role Hungary in the implementation of the Association Council.

On 7 October 2023, Israel was attacked on an unprecedented scale by the Hamas terrorist organisation. Hungary upholds its consistent position that Israel has an indisputable right to defend itself and its citizens.

We think Hungary's foreign policy aspirations that call for peace are all the more important in the current situation when the Israeli Hamas war claims the lives of thousands of victims of Palestinian, Israeli and other nationality. Relying on our outstanding diplomatic and political relations with Israel and other partners in the Middle East, primarily Egypt, we urge the



extension of the scope of the Abraham Accords and the search for solutions directed at lasting peace, which also take into account Israel's security and right to self-defence.

## 4. The legal status of Jewish communities in Hungary

In Hungary, Jewish religion is fundamentally practised in **three established churches**, which have the highest status among religious communities (Neology - MAZSIHISZ, Status Quo Ante - EMIH, Orthodox - MAOIH), two progressive religious communities: **Sim Shalom and Bet Orim**, and the **Hungarian Jewish Prayer Association (ZSIMA)**. After the amendment of Act CCVI of 2011 on the right to freedom of conscience and religion and the legal status of churches, denominations and religious communities in 2019, both progressive religious communities were granted the status of a church and are the associated members of MAZSIHISZ, while ZSIMA operates as a religious civil organisation.

### **MAZSIHISZ - Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities**

In 1950, the Communist regime forced all Hungarian Jewish communities to merge into a single umbrella organisation, the National Representation of Hungarian Israelites (MIOK), which remained in place until the regime was overthrown in 1989 and free religious practice was allowed once again upon the removal of the restrictions imposed by the atheist state. The revival of synagogues created ever more vibrant communal bonds: observing, studying and teaching religious rules, strengthening the moral foundations of Judaism and providing social care based on the commandments of the Torah were brought into sharp focus again. As a result, the reorganisation of MIOK led to the establishment of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (MAZSIHISZ) in 1991, which plays an outstanding and pivotal coordination role in Jewish culture and public life today. With nearly 1,000 children and students studying in the Federation's institutions, kindergartens, schools and universities, each of which serve to foster Jewish identity, the social network maintained by MAZSIHISZ eases the daily lives of thousands of people.

MAZSIHISZ maintains extensive relations with national and international Jewish organisations: it is a member of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), the European Jewish Congress (EJC), the European Council of Jewish Communities (ECJC), and an important partner of the State of Israel, the Claims Conference, The Joint, the Jewish Agency (Sochnut), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Zionist movement.

The Federation has about forty associated synagogues, with twenty in the capital city holding regular religious services. In addition to preserving religious traditions, the main tasks of MAZSIHISZ include social support and the strengthening and expansion of traditional Jewish education.

### **Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation (EMIH)**

Established by Slomó Köves in 2004, the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation (EMIH) is one of Hungary's three established Jewish churches (MAZSIHISZ, MAOIH, EMIH). EMIH considers itself to be the guardian of the ethos of the status quo. Hungarian legislation recognised the Status Quo Ante faction as the third Jewish faction in 1877, and its national organization was founded in 1927. The Communist state terminated all of the independent Jewish religious communities in 1950 and set up the National Representation of Hungarian Israelites (MIOK). It is against that backdrop that the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation

was re-established in 2004, and set out to support to religious recovery among the Jewry of Hungary by following the ethos and accepting and promoting the traditions of the former Status Quo Ante religious communities.

#### *The establishment of EMIH*

In 2004, the Hungarian component of the worldwide Chabad Lubavits Jewish movement inspired the foundation of the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation, which looks upon the Status Quo Ante faction as its spiritual predecessor. Its goal calls for the revival of that faction and for facilitating the religious development of Hungary's Jewry. The goal of the Congregation was to reach out to Jews who were previously relatively or totally inactive, and integrate them into religious life. To this end, they seek to create the conditions and framework necessary for practising Jewish traditions. The charter of the Congregation define EMIH as "a representative of a new young generation on its quest for new conservative values and ancient roots, which unites authentic values and orthodox traditions with openness and dynamic thinking by reviving the Status Quo faction."

#### *The funding of EMIH*

EMIH mostly relies on donations, membership contributions and earmarked support from applications to maintain its operations. As a registered church, it is also entitled to receive funding in the form of 1+1% personal income tax donations. The Act on Religion, which took effect in January 2012, granted equal status to MAZSIHISZ, EMIH and the Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary.

#### *Structure of organisation*

EMIH is headed by a chief rabbi who is in charge of managing operations. His work is supervised and assisted by an assembly of delegates representing member organisations, member institutes and church districts, and by executives elected by the Delegates' Assembly and the Rabbinate. The Chief Rabbi is elected and may be recalled by the Delegates Assembly on the proposal of the Rabbinate.

There is a growing number of locations with EMIH rabbis and communities in and outside Budapest.

#### **MAOIH - Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary**

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867 and the law of emancipation introduced a new era in the history of Hungary's Jewry within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Before the ratification of Act XVII of 1867 on emancipation, the Jewish denomination of Hungary consisted of a conglomerate of religious communities that were completely independent of each other. The first National Israelite Congress convened in the winter of 1868/69 upon the initiative of Baron József Eötvös, Minister of Culture. The representatives of the Congress set out to establish a national organisation for the Israelite religious communities of Hungary and Transylvania and thereby elevate the denomination to the ranks of a church. The orthodox communities refused to accept the by-laws of the Congress. Minister of Religion and Public Education Tivadar Pauler authorised the organisation of orthodox religious communities, and approved the "Charter of Organisation for Jewish denomination of autonomous followers of

faith in Hungary and Transylvania”. For advocacy reasons, the nationwide orthodox organisation was seated in Budapest, despite the largest orthodox communities resident in the countryside. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, orthodox Jewry had started to drift into the capital, making the orthodox community of Pest one of the largest in the country by the 1920s. During the Shoah, most of the Jewish communities were exterminated, and the exodus of survivors had completed by the mid-1950s, mostly because of the hardships of practising religion in the new social regime.

Hungary’s orthodoxy reorganised itself in 1993 and regained full independence and the status of a state-recognised church in 2012, which led to its departure from MAZSIHISZ in 2018. Their educational institution, including a crèche, kindergarten and primary school, operates in Budapest, and they have maintained and keep developing their long-standing Jewish Home for the Elderly on Alma utca.

### **Sim Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation**

Active since 1992, Sim Shalom is the first progressive (reformed) Jewish congregation in Hungary,<sup>43</sup> with 530 individuals dedicating 1% of their income tax to the organisation in 2023. The Congregation offers Sabbath and holiday worship services, community and cultural events, education for children and adults, and opportunities for celebrating the event of the Jewish life cycle.

They follow the principle that everyone in the community can approach religious traditions at their own pace, including those who are not well versed in Jewish liturgy and have not taken part in Jewish education. They attach importance to dialogue with other religions, as well as to men and women having equal rights in religious life.

They look upon the education of children as a key to maintaining their congregation, and – in line with their progressive approach – offer identical training to boys and girls within their B'nei Mitzvah (Children of the Commandment) program.

### **Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation**

Established in 2006, Bet Orim is the second Jewish reform congregation in Hungary. The reform movement within Judaism is a Jewish religious faction which emerged in German territory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, largely in parallel with the processes of emancipation and integration in Western Europe. It is popular today mainly in the Anglo-Saxon world.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, the Congregation has an open approach, with key elements such as the right of women to act as rabbis. Also, rabbis in the life of reform communities act as teachers rather than holding a classical leadership position.

The history of Hungary’s reform Jewish communities dates back to the war of independence in 1848/49, when Ignác Einhorn (and later Ede Horn) established the first community with

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.szimalsalom.hu/bemutakozunk/kik-vagyunk/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://betorim.hu/kozosseg/rolunk/a-reform-mozgalom/>

several free-thinking Jewish youth.<sup>45</sup> The members of Beet Orim continue to share their vision up to the present day.

Bet Orim promotes familiarity with the Jewish tradition and claims that all of its members need to follow their own path as regards observing religious laws and everyday conduct in life.

The Congregation hold regular events to discuss issues relating to religion and daily life. A total of 375 persons dedicated 1% of their personal income tax to the Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation in 2023.

### **Hungarian Jewish Prayer Association (ZSIMA)**

ZSIMA operates as a religious association of members who are mostly rabbis active in the various communities of MAZSIHISZ as well.

Among the established Jewish communities, the Government had concluded what would currently be understood as a comprehensive cooperation agreement with MAZSIHISZ (also signed by the representative of MAOIH) back in 2001, and another accord with EMIH (in 2019 under the new legal regulations).

Jewish religious communities, particularly those operating as established churches, receive major fiscal support for their operations. According to the 2011 census, the number of persons claiming to belong to an Israelite denomination was 10,965, which fell to 7,635 by the 2022 census. (The Jewry is not listed as a separate national minority in Hungary.) As the declaration of religious affiliation and membership in a denomination is an extremely sensitive question for Hungarian Jews, and as data collection for the 2022 census was not anonymous, the actual number of persons belonging to Jewish denominations is assumed to be higher. Jewish denominations estimate the number of persons of Jewish decent at roughly one hundred thousand.

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<sup>45</sup> <https://betorim.hu/kozosseg/dokumentumok/a-bet-orim-tortenete/>

Showing an increase of 5.5% between 2022 and 2023, the number of persons offering 1% of their personal income tax to a Jewish cause is in contrast with the trend of the census data. The table below shows how many people offered 1% of their personal income tax to a Jewish church.

Name	2022. évben SZJA felajánlók száma (fő)	Amount of PIT donated in 2022 (HUF)	Number of PIT donors in 2023 (persons) <sup>46</sup>	Amount of PIT donated in 2023 (HUF) <sup>47</sup>
Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities	11,968	110,936,049	12,629	131,792,283
Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation (Status Quo Ante)	2,521	17,518,682	2,552	20,473,197
Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary	336	2,586,749	353	3,008,885
Sim Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation	459	3,666,178	530	4,931,010
Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation	286	2,629,679	375	3,948,840
Total:	15,570	137,337,337	16,439	164,154,215

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<sup>46</sup> Based on preliminary data provided by the tax authority (NTCA) on 1 September 2023.

<sup>47</sup> Based on preliminary data provided by the tax authority (NTCA) on 1 September 2023

## 5. Contribution by Jewish communities to public functions

The renewal of Hungary is inconceivable without value-based communities. Faith-based communities dating back thousands of years are the natural allies of the Government of Hungary in these efforts. This is expressed by our Fundamental Law, which has created a model of cooperative separation. The role of churches has increased significantly both in terms of maintaining institutions and the number of persons receiving care.

The number of children and pupils attending the public education and vocational training institutions of MAZSIHISZ and EMIH is 1,314 and 822, respectively. With HUF 250 million of support earmarked for supporting churches, the Maimonides Jewish Secondary Grammar School opened its doors in 2017 to complement the Bet Menachem Hebrew-Hungarian Bilingual Primary School, Kindergarten and Crèche, with both institutions maintained by EMIH. MAOIH operates the American Endowment School, which applies serious religious criteria (Halakha laws) and consequently works with a minimal headcount of children.

The social institutions of MAZSIHISZ and MAOIH are operated on a denominational basis, and therefore represent the smallest segment of ecclesiastic social provisions, whilst EMIH has become a relatively large church maintainer of social institutions by taking over the nursing homes formerly called Arany Alkony (now Olajág).

At its meeting on 14 July 2021, the Government decided both on the new system of funding the so-called model-changing universities and on the need to develop a similar system for regulating and funding church-maintained higher education institutions. Also, the level of funding provided in the Treaty with the Holy See and the agreement between the Government and the Reformed Church of Hungary was to be raised to the level made available to model-changing universities. Any funds in excess of the wage hike of twice 15% are paid out based on quality and performance. To that end, similarly to the arrangements with Catholic and Reformed peers, the comprehensive agreement between the Government and EMIH, the entity maintaining the Milton Friedman University, has also been amended, along with the execution with EMIH of an agreement on fulfilling public functions. As a result, 92% of the students attending church-operated higher education institutions are covered. The Milton Friedman University is to receive additional funding at over HUF 4 billion by 2027.

## 6. Support for Jewish Churches

The Hungarian state **provides extensive financial support** to Jewish religious communities in and outside Hungary, with the table below summarising the amounts administered (from 2010 to October 2023) by the Office of the State Secretary for Churches in the Prime Minister's Office.

The support administered by the Office of the State Secretary for the benefit of Jewish religious communities in Hungary **amounted to over HUF 36.9 billion between 2010 and October 2023. As a positive change, the amount of annual support was more than doubled, from HUF 1,542.3 million in 2010 to HUF 3,832.1 million in 2023.**

The table below summarises the support granted to religious communities by the area responsible for churches within the Prime Minister's Office:

Religious community	Support granted by the area responsible for churches 2020-2023*
MAZSIHISZ	HUF 28,591,943,132
EMIH	HUF 5,031,834,842
MAOIH	HUF 2,919,67,881
ZSIMA	HUF 405,673,848
Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation	HUF 15,398,870
Sim Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation	HUF 23,252,398

\* Fiscal year not yet closed

### Growth of church subsidies in Hungary

- Operation of basic church institution, disposition and supplementation of PIT (personal income tax):

Year 2010: HUF 108.4 million → Year 2023: HUF 243.1 million (up 124%),

a breakdown of subsidies in 2023:

MAZSIHISZ:	HUF 194,612, 813
EMIH:	HUF 35,144,855
MAOIH:	HUF 4,935,971
Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation:	HUF 2,629,679
Sim Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation:	HUF 3,666,178
Kőszegi Jewish Community:	HUF 2,105,296

- Real property allowance for the three Jewish denominations of Hungary (distribution according to the multilateral agreements signed on 30 January 2012)

Year 2010: HUF 1,355.1 million → Year 2023: HUF 2,717.2 million (up 100%),



breakdown of subsidies in 2023:

MAZSIHISZ:	HUF 2,068,320,633
EMIH:	HUF 347,882,570
MAOIH:	HUF 300,970,735

- Ecclesiastic public collections and public education institutions (MAZSIHISZ)  
Year 2010: HUF 36.5 million → Year 2023: HUF 216.8 million (up 494%)
- Services performed in hospitals and healthcare institutions: A total of HUF 15 million in 2023 (deadline for submitting claims for 2024: 28 February 2024)

MAZSIHISZ:	HUF 7,000,000
EMIH:	HUF 8,000,000

- Income supplement

The Government provides additional income supplement without regard to the number of inhabitants in the given settlement, based on Government Decision 1266/2020 (29 May) on additional income supplement to church personnel of established churches and internal ecclesiastical legal persons at +60% in 2020 compared to the former level, and at +100% from 2021 onwards.

The budget earmarked for providing income supplement to church personnel continued to rise, and tripled in 2022 compared to the previous year, meaning that the support granted to Jewish communities will reach HUF 537.8 million in 2023.

- Support for the maintenance of cemeteries to MAZSIHISZ: to replace the support due to priests in small settlements, MAZSIHISZ was granted HUF 36 million for maintaining cemeteries under an agreement dated 2001. The amount has reached HUF 237 million since then;
- Support granted to EMIH to reorganise Jewish cultural life: In its agreement with EMIH, the Government made a commitment to provide annual support to EMIH for reorganising the cultural life of Jewish communities with a rich Jewish heritage in rural Hungary and outside the borders (at no less than HUF 25 million, but this amount has reached HUF 141.9 million by now);
- Income support to MAOIH amounted to HUF 14.2 million in 2023
- Income support to the Hungarian Jewish Prayer Association (ZSIMA) amounted to HUF 144.7 million.

MAOIH and ZSIMA have the discretion to decide on distributing the support and per capita amounts.

- Judaic Studies

Disbursements to Jewish communities earmarked for supporting elective Judaic Studies in 2010 amounted to HUF 11.2 million and grew by almost fivefold to reach HUF 53.3 million in 2023, distributed as follows:

MAZSIHISZ

HUF 39.3 million

EMIH

HUF 14.0 million

### ***Program of Refurbishing Church Buildings in Hungary***

Based on a Government decision on the Hungarian Program of Refurbishing Church Buildings dated 2021, **the refurbishment of 1,800 church buildings continued or was started inside and outside Hungary (1,400 churches in and 400 churches outside Hungary).**

This includes the refurbishment of **8 synagogues and oratories** in collaboration with MAZSIHISZ for a total amount of **HUF 110.4 million**, as well as a **synagogue in Révkomárom for HUF 6 million.**

### ***Grants to domestic synagogues***

The unit responsible for the churches granted **HUF 2,811.3 million**, while (based on information communicated to us) other portfolio units provided an additional **HUF 2,882.6 million** of government support to cover the cost of synagogue development projects in Hungary. We have no information about the status of utilisation of the funds granted by other portfolio units.

- **Development of 2 new Jewish synagogues and 2 new community spaces** (repurchasing the synagogues in Gyöngyös and Lágymányos; ZSILIP in Újlipótváros, and new community space in Szentendre);
  - Gyöngyös Synagogue: HUF 33.9 million (MAZSIHISZ); - status: purchase (HUF 18.9 million) completed, accounts settled, refurbishment (HUF 15.0 million) completed, report is in progress
  - Purchasing and refurbishing the Újlipótváros Synagogue: HUF 170.0 million (EMIH)
- **Renewing 22 existing synagogues** (MAZSIHISZ: synagogues in Rumbach Sebestyén Street and Zugló, Budapest, Nagykőrös, Karcag, Kaposvár, Kecskemét, Kiskunhalas, Miskolc, Nyíregyháza, Pécs, Szolnok, Debrecen, Gyöngyös, Vác and the new synagogue in Szeged; EMIH: synagogues in Vasvári Pál Street, Buda Castle and Óbuda in Budapest, in Szentendre and Mád; MAOIH: synagogue on Dessewffy Street and the Kazinczy Street Synagogue in Budapest.)

Major grants:

- Synagogue on Rumbach Sebestyén St., Budapest: HUF 1,717 million from the churches unit (+ HUF 1,450 million from other units of the Prime Minister's Office) – status: completed, accounts settled;
- Zugló: HUF 142 million – status: completed, accounts settled;
- Karcag: HUF 60.5 million from the churches unit (+ HUF 7,6 million from other units of the PMO) – status: refurbishment in progress, the deadline for

spending the last portion of funds (HUF 15 million) disbursed in 2021 is 31 December 2023;

- Miskolc: HUF 35 million from the churches unit (+ HUF 400 million from other units of the PMO) – status: refurbishment in progress, the deadline for spending the last portion of funds (HUF 15 million) disbursed in 2021 is 30 June 2023;
  - New Synagogue of Szeged: HUF 50 million from other units of the PMO
  - Vasvári Pál St., Budapest: HUF 127 million – status: completed, accounts settled;
  - Óbuda, Budapest: HUF 258 million – status: completed, accounts settled;
  - Refurbishment of the Kazinczy St. Synagogue: HUF 65 million (plus HUF 6 million in 2022 for refurbishing the mikveh) – status: no technical handover and receipt yet.
- **4 synagogues not dedicated to religious purposes have also been renewed** (in Szeged, Hódmezővásárhely, Berettyóújfalu and Hajdúböszörmény).
    - E.g.: Szeged synagogue (HUF 950 million from other units of the PMO) – for cultural purposes – funds granted by other portfolio units.

***Total of HUF 849.5 million granted to synagogues outside Hungary:***

- Developments serving community goals at the Shelter and Synagogue in Révkomárom – status: implemented, settlement in progress;
- Comprehensive refurbishment of the exterior and the interior of the Szabadka Synagogue from HUF 836 million granted by the Hungarian National Council (Office of the State Secretary for Nation Policy) and funds granted by the EU – status: no information on the utilisation of funds granted by other areas,
- Renewal of the synagogue in Beregszász – HUF 5 million

***High priority cross-border Jewish projects:***

- supporting the programs of Hungarian speaking Jewish villages across the border: e.g., highly successful Jewish cultural days in the Subcarpathian region and Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) for years.

***The state also supports the operation of Jewish civil organisations.*** 2023 data show that the annual support granted to key organisations reached **HUF 1,079.5 million**:

- Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation (HDKE): HUF 330 million,
- Hungarian Jewish Heritage Public Foundation (MAZSÖK): HUF 100 million,
- Action and Protection Foundation (TEV): HUF 509.5 million,
- The March of the Living Foundation: HUF 70 million
- Hungarian Jewish Prayer Association: HUF 70 million.

## 7. The question of Jewish real property allowance and ownerless assets

In its capacity as legal successor, MAZSIHISZ acted for and on behalf of all historical Jewish communities when it concluded the real property allowance agreement with the first Orbán Government in 1998 (which was also signed by the then president of MAOIH, who was also deputy president of MAZSIHISZ). The comprehensive agreement of 2001 confirmed the provisions of the 1998 property allowance agreement. In the meantime, however, Hungarian Jewish communities got realigned in accordance with the historical structure of their denomination. Accordingly, multilateral agreements were signed on 30 January 2012, whereby MAZSIHISZ transferred annual allowances worth HUF 190 million to MAOIH and HUF 150 million to EMIH, but the rules of valorisation set in the agreement were more favourable for EMIH, and as a result EMIH receives higher benefits under this title now. Furthermore, the agreement also provides that in case the National Assembly recognises additional Jewish communities as churches, they must also be included in the distribution of the allowance. The Budapest Capital Regional Court registered the progressive Jewish communities Bet Orim and Sim Shalom as listed churches in line with the modification of the Act on churches in 2018, which took effect on 15 April 2019. Amendments of the agreement on splitting the allowance further and including new participants are naturally the competence of the Jewish communities that are party to the agreement. Legal disputes, if any, may be taken before the courts of Hungary.

The Government approved the agreement in a decision, which was necessary because it is the duty of the Government to disburse the allowance, and the government decision authorises the transfer of any assigned allowances directly to the beneficiary Jewish communities (MAOIH and EMIH).

In the meantime, serious debates arose among the Jewish communities in connection with distributing the allowance. MAOIH and EMIH (invoking their status quo ante roots and emphasising their relations with Jewish orthodoxy) are dissatisfied with the real property allowance assigned to them, and have initiated a Government review of the allowance agreements. MAOIH went as far as taking its case before a Rabbinical Court in Jerusalem. (The Government was notified of the proceedings by MAOIH and David Lau, Israel's Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, President of the Rabbinical Court.) The Jerusalem Rabbinical Court decided the case in favour of the orthodoxy. MAZSIHISZ did not recognise the jurisdiction of the Rabbinical Court, and the affected Jewish communities failed to reach an agreement in the case. MAOIH remarked that it will take its claim before the courts in Hungary. (As the state of Hungary has no power to enforce decisions of foreign religious courts.)

Since the regime change in 1989, the Government of Hungary has been providing compensation to the Jewry of Hungary, including by way of perpetual allowances, returning real property, and providing generous grants to Jewish communities.

The payments made by Hungary between 2007 and 2012 to settle the country's dues amounted to USD 21 million, paid to support Holocaust survivors living in Hungary and

moved abroad. The tasks laid down in the agreement were enforced through MAZSÖK, and the related reports were adopted in 2013. Furthermore, Article U, Paragraph 9 of the Fundamental Law of Hungary settled finally and closed the issue: “No legal regulation may establish new legal grounds for compensation providing financial or any other pecuniary payment to individuals who were unlawfully deprived of their lives or freedom for political reasons and who suffered undue property damage by the State before 2 May 1990.”

Acting for the Jewry of Hungary, MAZSIHISZ (Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities), EMIH (Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation) and MAOIH (Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary) issued a joint memorandum on 13 October 2021, stating that settling the actions envisaged in Article 27 of the Paris Peace Treaty of 10 February 1947 in respect of what are known as “ownerless assets” is an interest shared by all three established Jewish churches.

## 8. Introducing Jewish Organisations and Public Foundations

### **Hungarian Jewish Heritage Public Foundation (MAZSÖK)**

To perform its legal obligation under international law imposed by Section 2 of Article 27 of the Paris Treaty of Peace, promulgated by Act XVIII of 1947, the Government of the Republic of Hungary has established the Hungarian Jewish Heritage Public Foundation for the benefit and in the interest of the surviving members of Jewish communities, in order to compensate them for the loss of aggrieved and heirless individuals of Jewish origin or religion.

The goals laid down in the Charter of MAZSÖK call for ensuring that individuals subjected to harassing measures motivated by racial, religious or other Fascist ideology due to their Jewish origin, or their communities and successors, can reorganise their religious, cultural and educational systems and strengthen their Jewish identity. Caring for Holocaust survivors in Hungary is another essential duty. Relying on the Pension Payment Directorate, the organisation pays monthly life annuity to Holocaust survivors. Europe is unique in that support for second-generation Holocaust survivors – the children of survivors – has also been launched.

The main duty of MAZSÖK is to elevate Hungary's Jewish civil, cultural and religious life to the prosperous and flourishing state witnessed before World War II. That is why MAZSÖK operates a system which has assisted applicants by granting annual support from its own funds at HUF 100 million until 2020, and HUF 200 million since 2020.

The applications aim to ensure that the supported Jewish organisations are widely represented in society/ Their activities promote the preservation of traditions, worship and identity in the fields of culture and education.

Applications may be submitted in a variety of categories:

- supporting the operation of organisations (any Jewish organisation registered in Hungary may apply; the grants help the operation of 35-40 organisations on average each year),
- project applications (e.g. supporting worship and synagogue communities, protecting and developing Jewish intellectual heritage, building Jewish communities, social and health care support, supporting the development of assets at Jewish schools and kindergartens. MAZSÖK supports a total of 150 projects each year. As regards applications relating to building Jewish communities, mention must be made of the subsidised vacations for roughly 800 persons hosted at the holiday house of the Public Foundation in Badacsonytomaj),
- application for social support (for poor and socially disadvantaged kindergarten children and pupils of Jewish decent attending Jewish or state run institutions). The Public Foundation supports 100 socially deprived families in its application framework.

Over 100 abandoned Jewish cemeteries were renovated in a project conducted by MAZSÖK last year from support received from the Government of Hungary.

MAZSÖK ran several programs in recent years, such as the Memorial Year of Jewish Emancipation, the Ocskay Prize, the Szenes Hanna Memorial Series, or the Monument of Forced Labour on Teleki Square.

### **Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation (HDKE)**

Set up by the Hungarian Government in 2002, the Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation (HDKE) is the legal successor to the Hungarian Auschwitz Foundation, which was established upon social initiative in 1990. It continues the predecessor's efforts exerted over more than a decade to carry out unique research designed to close the backlog into the Holocaust in Hungary.

The Public Foundation has undertaken a varied social mission by performing duties relating to history, documentation and exploration, and by offering education and awareness-raising. It also fulfils functions of national remembrance and compassion through organising and attending memorial events. In this context, the Centre intends to document and demonstrate co-existence, loss and recommencement after the Shoah.

Located at 39 Páva Street, Budapest, this is the first government-founded Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Central and Eastern Europe. The institution processes and conserves the history and the modern day persecution of the Hungarian Jewry and citizens declared Jewish on a racial basis, the road to and the impacts of the catastrophe, the consequences of the irrecoverable loss, as well as the reasons for and lessons learnt from the aggressive and tragic cessation of Hungarian historical traditions.

As its core activity, the Public Foundation seeks to explore, collect, preserve, process and disclose documents primarily relevant to Hungary about persecution motivated by religious, racial or other political causes, forced labour and deportation, the operation and victims of Nazi concentration camps between 1938 and 1945, in the areas of history, literature and art history.

The Institution is committed to preserving the memory of the tragedy the Shoah inflicted upon the Jewry of Hungary, and to offering a credible presentation of the life and history and local Jews. Introducing the way of life and the social roots of Jews subjected to the Shoah using the tools of musealisation and education is of the highest priority. Getting to know different groups in society in this way helps people of all ages recognise similarities and manage differences more easily. It brings the Jews living in Hungary closer to the members of society.

The Public Foundation serves the needs of academic researchers and museum teaching, and also caters to the local population and tourists visiting the institution.

The Public Foundation believes and is convinced that teaching future generations and supporting their acquisition of the most thorough knowledge about the facts of and the lessons learnt from the Shoah, *which is required not only for understanding and processing the past*, will also contribute to a better understanding of their own societies.

The Public Foundation places emphasis on shaping identity awareness and the process of educating people to think independently, tolerantly and critically through establishing *close cooperation with research, education and museum teaching institutions*.

It offers accredited training, professional consultation and various forms of assistance to *teachers* about engaging in the discussion of antisemitism, racism and the Holocaust during school lessons.

- “Lives up in smoke”: international remote training program for professionals,
- Jad Vasem study trip - for teachers in Hungary,
- Holocaust by Bullets - international teacher training seminar.

*Students* are offered guided tours at permanent and temporary exhibitions introducing the history of the Holocaust in Hungary, as well as free of charge sessions built from modules and fine-tuned to age groups, delivered upon request. The topics include:

- Human rights during the Holocaust,
- Children’s fate in World War II,
- Life savers, perpetrators of crime, and the persecuted (playful introduction to saving human lives and a discussion of the topics of being persecuted and perpetrating crimes)

*Travelling exhibitions:* The travelling exhibitions of the foundation are deployed at schools and cultural institutions upon prior consultation. Students are trained to act as tour guides so that they can assist peers and interested parties at these exhibitions upon completing the relevant training.

*Holocaust remembrance and piety role:* One to the key objectives of the institution involves commemorating the 500-600 thousand victims of the Holocaust killed in Hungary during the Shoah. The internal courtyard of the institution accommodates memorial sites of the Jewish denominations of Hungary, as well as the Memorial Wall of Victims, a place of remembrance and piety for second and third generation successors and emigrant family members.

*Research workshop:* Scientific research has been part of the profile of the institution since its establishment. In line with their goals, their research topics include social history, art history, literary history, sociology, ethnography and cultural anthropology. This way, documenting the events of the Holocaust and researching the stories of forced labourers are complemented with the study of Zionism and orthodoxy, and the issue of the Romani Holocaust.

The Holocaust Documentation Centre is not simply a memorial site a base for research and education and an exhibition venue, but it is also the permanent home for a variety of cultural and professional events, such as lectures, roundtable discussions, conferences, temporary exhibitions and publishing books.



## **The March of the Living Foundation**

In October 2003, a civil community of young people initiated the establishment of the Hungarian March of the Living Foundation, modelled after 55 similar organisations operating globally.

The Foundation aims to hold events that bring together the young and the elderly, relatives, interested parties and survivors, regardless of denomination or political affiliation, to pay tribute to and remember the victims of the Holocaust and to confirm their belief in social solidarity and democratic political culture.

The March of the Living Foundation finances its programs from government grants, donations and application funds. It cooperates with civil organisations, educational institutions, as well as individuals and diplomatic corps that wish to play a role in the dissemination of authentic knowledge about history and in combating contemporary racism, antisemitism and all forms of exclusion.

An important mission of the Foundation involves education and awareness raising, including ways to raise the young to be tolerant by learning from the lessons of the past. The Foundation holds regular awareness-raising lessons with participating survivors at schools that are open to such sessions. To the degree possible, the foundation organises annual groups visits to Poland and Israel for Jewish and non-Jewish students to allow children to learn about traditions and the roots of Jewish-Christian culture after a joint commemoration.

Programs organised to preserve Holocaust remembrance in the field of teaching and researching knowledge about the Holocaust, and the related results:

*The Budapest March of the Living*: in addition to remembrance, it is also an important goal to emphasise that the Holocaust was not limited to remote locations, but it actually happened in our immediate environment.

The Foundation organises the *participation* of a Hungarian delegation in the *International March of the Living* in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Their delegation regularly participates in memorial events abroad (such as The Jerusalem March of the Living, the Memorial day of the Lithuanian Holocaust in Vilnius, the anniversary of the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp, remembering the fate of Hungarians held captive in the Ravensbrück camp).

The Foundation has constructed a 32 square metre replica of the camp in Birkenau and developed a matching interactive session.

It has developed several educational and information programs over the years. One of the most popular examples is the *moving wagon exhibition*, which delivers crucial facts, images and memories about the Holocaust to a handful of Hungarian cities each year.

The Foundation also operates six travelling exhibitions: “Deported Lives”, “Parallel Fates”, “Staying Human”, “Remaining Speechless is a Sin”, and “Pharrajimos: Romani Holocaust”.

The volunteers of the Foundation also give special interactive history lessons in public institutions upon request.

Their program called “*This Land’s a Map*” is a *virtual trip*, with a historian guiding participants on a tour of authentic Holocaust sites, while “*The March of the Living Open University*” is a program where speakers specialising in the culture of commemoration, together with science and public figures, are invited to give short presentations about certain topics.

In 2015, they published a *storybook on tolerance* for kids entitled “Stories in Multiple Colour”, with acclaimed Hungarian authors and graphic artists telling tales about the importance of patience and love, if we wish to live peacefully with each other.

Thousands have played the online *quiz* the Foundation launched in 2016. They have also developed a *Tolerance Meter*, which is popular at festivals, schools and other events.

The short films András Salamon shot for the Foundation have also earned international attention. The concerts they organise host the best of Hungary’s musicians to take a stance for common values.

Their foundation has organised meetings, scientific conferences and workshops for Holocaust survivors. These events are attended by hundreds of people.

Everyone who is interested in true history, the roots of contemporary racism and exclusion, and what to do against these phenomena is invited, without regard to religion or ethnicity, to their programs and events held at external sites.

During its operations for close to 20 years, the March of the Living Foundation has delivered the message to thousands of Hungarians, young and old alike, that ‘it is our common duty to remember and remind others to prevent the past of our grandparents from becoming the future of our children’.

### **Action and Protection Foundation (TEV)**

Upon the initiative of Chief Rabbi Dr. Slomó Köves, the Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary established the Action and Protection Foundation in November 2012 to offer a new alternative to deteriorating public discourse, a lack of knowledge which fuels antisemitism, and ineffective legal action against atrocities and infringements, along the lines of positive Jewish identity and a strategy of community organisation.

The Foundation aims to act as a Jewish community to counter exclusion and the growth of antisemitism in the framework provided by democracy and aims to use its social network to deliver help to the victims of wrongdoing. They set out to raise their voice against any intention to curb the notions of freedom and equality; the prime responsibility of the Jewish community in terms of everyday action is to deal with situations that directly affect the Jewry.

The operations of the Foundation are expressly targeted at maintaining ongoing relations with international and domestic peer organisations based on exchanging information and transferring knowledge, such as the Szochnut Jewish Agency, the American Jewish Committee, and the Lantos Institute.

The Foundation seeks to deliver legal protection based on uniform professional standards, drawing on its capacity to examine and research antisemitism in Europe in the 21st century

and to produce effective options for combating this phenomenon. That includes the definition and promotion of opportunities for legal, legislative, educational and political action.

The Action and Protection Foundation pays particular attention to prevention, including the operation of a secondary school program which provides schools with lectures and presentations on a variety of topics. The programs have been constructed to offer suitable options for each age group. (Program titles: Being a Jew Every Day; Actions Motivated by Hatred in Hungary; Failed Political Messages of the Far Right; Argumentation Techniques in Debates Against Hate Speech and Exclusion).

### **Keren Hayesod Hungaria Foundation – United Israel Appeal**

The Foundation works to foster and raise awareness of Jewish culture in Hungary, in the European Union and other countries of the world, to strengthen Jewish identity in Hungary, in the European Union and other countries of the world, to fight antisemitism, and to improve the living conditions of Jewish people.

### **MOZAIK – Jewish Community Hub**

The Mozaik Hub has set out to provide professional and financial support to NGOs of the Jewish community that contribute to promoting Jewish community life and Jewish values. The Mozaik Hub provides infrastructure and assets. It provides professional support, organises training courses, presentations and roundtables, offers a platform for going public and capacity building, and delivers financial support to new initiatives.

### **MAZSIKE - Hungarian Jewish Cultural Club**

Established in November 1988, the Club is one of the first Jewish civil organisations in Hungary.

As a cornerstone of their activities, they do not only promote experiencing cultural identity but also help out Jewish compatriots be proud of both their Jewish and Hungarian roots. They organise cultural events, festivals, concerts, interesting city tours, exhibitions and trips.

### **MAZSISZEM – Memorial Committee for Hungarian Jewish Freedom Fighters**

Their goal is to commemorate the struggle for freedom of Hungarian Jews from 1848 to the present day, to preserve and nurture the memory of the heroes of Jewish origin of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-49, the memory of the Jewish heroes of the 1956 Revolution, and the memory of the Jewish heroes who left Hungary to fight for the independence of the State of Israel.

An important goal of the Committee is the dissemination of knowledge, as it provides a framework for Jews living in Hungary to experience their identity positively. The Committee's duties also include cultural activities, producing, procuring, distributing and disseminating teaching materials, books and publications, issuing calls for application, and holding events with a specific cultural purpose. Their events are also open to outsiders.

### **Hungarian Zionist Association**

A platform for Zionist youth and adults. They organise and support Zionist and Jewish programs, events and camps. The Association was established in 1902. This umbrella

organisation unites 9 member organisations at present. Supporting Jewish culture and the state of Israel is a common feature of the member organisations, such as Maccabi VAC Hungary and the Marom Klub Society. The Marom Klub Society started out as a cultural organisation of Zionist youth in 1999, but has grown during the years to become one of the most important civil community organisers, while retaining its original focus and expanding its activities.

## 9. Presentation of Jewish culture in Budapest

### **Jewish life in Budapest**

Dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Jewish Community of Budapest had grown into one of the largest and most prosperous Jewish religious denominations by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A quarter of the population of Pest was of Jewish origin. In 1950, the Israelite communities of Pest, Buda and Óbuda merged under the current name of Jewish Community of Budapest. All synagogues in Budapest were aggregated into that single Israelite community. Before the war, the head office had been established in the central building of the former Israelite Community of Pest on Síp utca. In 1950, the Communist government created an umbrella entity named National Representation of Hungarian Israelites (MIOK) for controlling all aspects of Jewish religious life in Hungary. Following the transition to democracy in 1989, MIOK was transformed into the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (MAZSIHISZ).<sup>48</sup>

The Jewish Community of Budapest operates 14 synagogues and prayer houses divided into the following districts:

- Buda (Frankel Leó utca Synagogue),
- Újpest (Újpest Synagogue),
- Scheiber Sándor utca (Bét Jehuda Synagogue),
- Hunyadi tér (Hunyadi tér Synagogue),
- Dohány utca (Dohány utca Synagogue),
- Bethlen tér (Bethlen tér Synagogue),
- Nagy Fuvaros utca (Nagy Fuvaros utca Synagogue),
- Páva utca (Páva utca Synagogue),
- Lágymányosi (Bét Sálom) Synagogue,
- Hegedűs Gyula utca (Hegedűs Gyula utca Synagogue),
- Dózsa György út (Dózsa György út Synagogue),
- Zugló (Zugló Synagogue),
- South Pest (Pesterzsébet Prayer House).

The recently renovated, remarkable synagogue on Rumbach Sebestyén utca is also owned by the Jewish Community of Budapest.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> <https://bzsh.hu/magunkrol/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://bzsh.hu/magunkrol/>

## **Synagogue on Rumbach Sebestyén utca**

Designed by Otto Wagner in 1869, the Synagogue on Rumbach Sebestyén serves sacral functions, but it can also be transformed into a venue for cultural events.<sup>50</sup>

The renovation had started based on a government decree passed in 2017.<sup>51</sup> All of the HUF 3.2 billion cost was funded by the state, and specifically from the budget of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Human Capacities.<sup>52</sup>

The opening ceremony of the renovated synagogue took place on 10 June 2021, when the Torah was placed, and the synagogue space was dedicated. The building is suitable for various religious ceremonies, as well as other events such as exhibitions, musical and theatre performances, and podium discussions. This fulfils the mission of the House, namely the service of cultural variety.<sup>53</sup>

### About the building

As the buildings on Rumbach utca constitute an unbroken row, the synagogue almost fully blends into the townscape. Thanks to the work of painter László Haraszti, the original colours of the building have been restored. Mr Haraszti had also conserved the mosaic images. He also helped preserve previously undocumented motives. The interior spaces of synagogues are painted in three main colours: blue, red, and ochre. Gold is also used, albeit sparingly. The building features a series of repeating floral patterns, most of them geometrically shaped. Gilded pillars, terrazzo flooring, as well as a globular ark with shining star motives inside provide for an unmatched overall view. The octagonal interior space is capped with an ornamental dome supported by eight slender iron columns and Moorish-style Alhambra capitals.<sup>54</sup>

### Modern elements

Underfloor heating serves the visitors' comfort, and the interior is cooled with special ventilation in the summer. In the middle of the octagonal space, button-operated stage technology allows for lowering or elevating the Torah-reading podium as needed. This is the only synagogue in the world equipped with such a unique hydraulic lifting system.

The building is furnished with modern and comfortable chairs that allow for flexibly configuring the auditorium. The auditorium on the first (ground) floor is equipped with built-in benches. Behind these, an exhibition organised by the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives awaits visitors.

### New functions upstairs:

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www.szombat.org/hirek-lapszemle/a-rumbach-zsinagoga-a-latogatok-szamara-is-megnyilik>

<sup>51</sup> [https://nepszava.hu/3122684\\_felavattak-a-rumbach-sebestyen-utcai-zsinagogat](https://nepszava.hu/3122684_felavattak-a-rumbach-sebestyen-utcai-zsinagogat)

<sup>52</sup> <https://bzsh.hu/2018/03/22/jol-halad-a-rumbach-zsinagoga-felujitasa/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.szombat.org/hirek-lapszemle/a-rumbach-zsinagoga-a-latogatok-szamara-is-megnyilik>

<sup>54</sup> <https://kultura.hu/rumbach-zsinagoga/>

The former coal cellar has been rebuilt into a reception area.

Community spaces for museum pedagogy sessions and minor exhibitions have been set up on the second floor. The third floor houses a meat kosher café and saloon, as well as a conference room. The fourth floor serves a permanent exhibition offering a contemporary, digital audio-visual experience. This space is dedicated to an innovative combination of films, animations, and document management tools. As a key design objective, the house should also offer events and programs that attract young people. The fifth (top) floor is dedicated to the Mosaic Jewish Community Hub which serves as a professional platform to civil organisations. This floor is not open to the public.<sup>55</sup>

### Events in the synagogue

The synagogue hosts various cultural programs, such as the Jewish Cultural Festival of 2022.<sup>56</sup> The joint Hannukah held in the Synagogue on Rumbach utca should also be mentioned.

Furthermore, the following organisations operate under the aegis of the community:

- Benjamin Kindergarten,
- Scheiber Sándor Primary and Secondary School,
- Foreign Trade Technical School,
- King David Dormitory,
- several clubs for pensioners,
- the Újpest Nursing Home,
- as well as the Jewish cemeteries on Kozma utca, Farkasrét and Kerepesi út, and 13 other Jewish cemeteries.<sup>57</sup>

The Jewish Community of Budapest operates a high-volume kosher kitchen. This facility serves the students and residents of institutions, as well as hundreds of people in need, with daily kosher food. The goal is to satisfy the daily food needs of the Jewry in Budapest, as well as foreign tourists.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> <https://www.szombat.org/hirek-lapszemle/a-rumbach-zsinagoga-a-latogatok-szamara-is-megnyilik>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.zsidokulturalisfesztival.hu/rumbach-utcai-zsinagoga>

<sup>57</sup> <https://bzsh.hu/magunkrol/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://bzsh.hu/magunkrol/>

Synagogues maintained by the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation:

### **Synagogue on Vasvári Pál utca**

The building was erected in 1886 for the Talmud Society of Budapest (Szász Chevra) established by Ede Fleischman and Gusztáv Taub in 1842. The synagogue was intended as a facility to preserve traditions and remember the founders through preaching based on the Talmud, and via Kaddish prayers. The building saw the number of visitors rise in response to regular recitations from the Talmud and the Torah. Various renovation works have been carried out since Hungary's transition to democracy. After comprehensive reconstruction in 1990, the benches were renovated in 2004, and the courtyard flooring was renewed in 2011. Following careful architectural assessment and planning, the internal spaces of the synagogue were restored in 2022.<sup>59</sup> The restoration works were based on a single black and white photo from the Jewish Archives, which shows the temple in the 1920s. The Vasvári Synagogue currently houses Hungary's only Yeshivah college for studying the Talmud, which also receives students from abroad.<sup>60</sup>

### **Óbuda Synagogue**

One of the oldest synagogues of Hungary's Jewry is located in Óbuda. Built in 1821, the facility had operated until after World War II, with the number of visitors declining in the wake of the war. It was taken over by EMIH in 2010; when renovations started from the donations of the congregation.. The synagogue opened with High Holy Day Service in September 2010 to celebrate New Year. Since that time, Jewish community life has blossomed, and the synagogue has become a centre of EMIH activities.<sup>61</sup>

### **Buda Castle Synagogue**

The Medieval Jewish Prayer House (Buda Castle Synagogue) serves as a memento of the Jewish community in town of Buda in the Middle Ages and the early Modern Era.<sup>62</sup> Established at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Prayer House was dedicated again by EMIH almost 400 years later, on 6 September 2018.<sup>63</sup>

### **ZSILIP Community Centre and Synagogue**

This facility is intended to promote direct connections with Jewish culture. The community centre attracts visitors with a kosher confectionery and bistro, musical and theatre performances, study programs, and a playhouse for children. <sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Vasvári Pál utca synagogue, <https://zsido.com/emih/bemutakozas/zsinagogaink-kozossegeink/>

<sup>60</sup> The rabbi of the Vasvári Synagogue showed us the recently renovated building: <https://enbudapestem.hu/2022/09/vasvari-zsinagoga-rabbi-haszid-talmud/>

<sup>61</sup> Synagogue of Óbuda, <https://zsido.com/emih/bemutakozas/>

<sup>62</sup> Medieval Jewish Prayer House, <https://www.varmuzeum.hu/kozepkori-zsido-imahaz.html>

<sup>63</sup> Buda Castle Synagogue, <https://zsido.com/emih/bemutakozas/zsinagogaink-kozossegeink/>

<sup>64</sup> ZSILIP community centre and synagogue, <https://zsido.com/emih/bemutakozas/zsinagogaink-kozossegeink/>



## **Chábád Keren Or Cultural Centre and Synagogue**

Located in the heart of Budapest, the Keren Or Centre is a popular meeting point for Israelites in the capital city. The facility houses the head office of EMIH, as well as higher education rooms and cultural events. The Centre is led by Rabbi Samuel Raskin.<sup>65</sup>

## **Vörösmarty utca Synagogue**

Reopened in August 2021 as part of an event series called “Week of Synagogues”, the Orthodox prayer house on Vörösmarty utca had previously been closed around 1983. The Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary offered the building to EMIH for utilisation. The Community could not fill the closed prayer house with life, and saw the positive examples of EMIH. The religious leader of the synagogue is Rabbi Shmuel Oirechman.<sup>66</sup>

## **Synagogue of Újbuda**

Opened in 1936, this synagogue was transformed into a warehouse by the Germans in 1944, and was used as a stable during the siege of Budapest. The survivors took possession of the synagogue in 1945, and already celebrated Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) with prayers here. The building was nationalised in 1950, and handed over to a scientific education association (TIT) in 1966. Then the former religious centre was reopened by EMIH.<sup>67</sup>

Institutions maintained by the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation (EMIH):

### **Bét Menáchem Bilingual Primary School, Kindergarten and Nursery**

This state-accredited school and kindergarten, which provides education in Hebrew and Hungarian, has been in operation since 1 September 2012. All children are welcome in the institution, regardless of their religious background. The pupils include children speaking Hebrew and English as their mother tongue. The institution believes that youth education is key to the future of the Jewry.<sup>68</sup>

### **Maimonides Secondary School**

The main mission of this secondary school is to provide a positive social experience, and to serve as a source of joy to students. That is why the classes have lower headcount, so that every student is given due attention. This school is part of the education community around the social network of EMIH. This allows for social and organisational life of curricular and extracurricular nature. The students can perform voluntary social work in EMIH institutions (“Olajág” homes for the elderly, and the Cedek charity service). According to its credo, the Maimonides Secondary School focuses on knowledge transfer and awareness of Jewish

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<sup>65</sup> Chábád Keren Or Cultural Centre and Synagogue, <https://zsido.com/emih/bemutakozas/zsinagogaink-kozossegeink/>

<sup>66</sup> EMIH consecrates another synagogue <https://zsido.com/ujra-zsinagogat-avat-az-emih/>

<sup>67</sup> Opening of the Synagogue of Újbuda, <https://zsido.com/ilyen-volt-az-ujbudai-zsinagoga-atadasa-video/>

<sup>68</sup> Bét Menáchem Bilingual Primary School, Kindergarten and Nursery, <https://zsidoiskola.hu/bemutakozas/>

traditions and familiarity with the community, rather than on demanding strict compliance with rules.<sup>69</sup>

### **“Olajág” homes for the elderly**

The “Olajág” (“Olive Branch”) homes for the elderly offer committed professionals and accessible facilities to pensioners who wish to spend their senior years in safety and peace, in an active community. The facilities provide comprehensive care and provisions, including wide-ranging health care services. Excursions as well as museum and theatre visits are organised to the residents. A kindergarten project has been launched in order to promote cross-generational openness. They also focus on life-long learning with the involvement of professors from the Milton Friedman University.<sup>70</sup>

### **“Tzedek” (Cedek) Charity Service**

Following comprehensive preparations, the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation (Status Quo Ante) established the “Tzedek EMIH Jewish Charity Service” in 2015. The word “tzedek” means “justice”.<sup>71</sup> Cedek aims to help everybody in need, including persons who are ill, elderly, disabled, disadvantaged or homeless. They are also ready to provide shelter to refugees, pilgrims, as well as disaster and war victims.

### **“Zsibolygó” Kindergarten and Nursery of Óbuda**

The “Zsibolygó” Kindergarten is a bilingual (English and Hungarian) Jewish pre-school facility aiming to raise a generation of people who proudly profess their Jewish identity, and are open to the world.<sup>72</sup>

The Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary (MAOIH) operates two synagogues, one in Kazinczy utca, and the other in Dessewffy utca.

### **History of the synagogue on Kazinczy utca**

In 1909, the Orthodox Jewish Community had invited offers for the construction of a multifunctional religious complex. The offers received were assessed by a panel of experts. They decided to charge the Löffler brothers, Béla and Samu, with the work. Having earmarked 650,000 crowns for the construction, the community approved the detailed designs presented by Sándor and Béla Löffler on 8 November 1910.<sup>73</sup> Besides the synagogue itself, the complex included facilities such as schoolrooms, an apartment for the rabbi, a head office, a kitchen, and a canteen.

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<sup>69</sup> Maimonides Secondary School, <https://zsidogimnazium.hu/kozosseg/>

<sup>70</sup> “Olajág” homes for the elderly, <https://www.olajagotthonok.hu/rolunk/>

<sup>71</sup> Tzedek / Cedek charity service, <https://cedek.hu/fedezz-fel-minket/>

<sup>72</sup> “Zsibolygó” Kindergarten and Nursery, <https://zsibolygo.hu/#kik>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.kitervezte.hu/epuletek/vallas/kazinczy-utcai-zsinagoga-budapest>

The school and the head office on Dob utca were the first parts of the multifunctional complex to be completed, in 1911 and 1912, respectively. Stained-glass windows made in the workshop of Miksa Róth are adorn the head office. Stained-glass windows were also installed in the synagogue. The synagogue was dedicated on 29 September 1913.

An outstanding piece of architectural heritage, the synagogue on Kazinczy utca is the only Secessionist building of its kind in Hungary that is still used for its original purpose. Transylvanian motives are visible on the benches and the bimah of the synagogue, which has more than 1,000 seats. The pillars at the eastern wall are decorated with Zsolnay porcelain inlays. The façade is rather modest, with the following quotation from the Old Testament running in Hebrew across it: "How awesome this place is! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." (1 Genesis 28:17)

Interestingly, the rabbi's chair to the left of the ark has not been used by the religious leaders of the community since 1929. This tradition of respect started after the death of the first rabbi of the synagogue.<sup>74</sup>

### **Synagogue on Dessewffy utca**

The synagogue on Dessewffy utca is one of the oldest Orthodox places of worship still in use. Converted from a stable for horses in 1870, the building was the seat of the Bikur Cholim society of the Orthodox community in 1926. Helping the sick was their main activity.

The building used to be called the temple of the "red caps", because the synagogue was initially visited by carters and carriers who wore red caps. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more distinguished middle-class Jews started to use the synagogue.<sup>75</sup>

Architecturally, the synagogue consists of two parts, an anteroom and the synagogue space itself. The anteroom accommodates a cup and bowl for ritual handwashing. Washing with water is a symbol of physical and spiritual cleansing, so that the faithful can attend the ceremonies free of their sins. There is no separate kiyor (handwashing cup and bowl) for women, because they are not actively involved in religious rituals.<sup>76</sup>

Other institutions of MAOIH:

- Orthodox nursing home on Alma utca
- Orthodox Archive
- Masoret Avot education institution (nursery and kindergarten)

**Below we present examples for the varied and lively Jewish cultural life in Budapest.**

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<sup>74</sup> <http://maoih.hu/zsinagogak/kazinczy-utcai-fozsinagoga/>

<sup>75</sup> <http://maoih.hu/zsinagogak/dessewffy-utcai-zsinagoga/>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.kidma.hu/zsinagoacutega-tours/dessewffy-zsinagoga>

## **Jewish Cultural Festival**

The festival is organised by the Jewish Community of Budapest, ZION, a non-profit company for public benefit, and the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities.

Anyone may take part in the events of the cultural festival, regardless of age. The events include literature programs, cooking coupled with music, various concerts by outstanding artists, as well as afternoon musical and literary tales for children. These programs are delivered in the synagogues, in strict compliance with the facility's rules of conduct.<sup>77</sup>

## **Bálint House**

As a facility for Hungary's Jewish community, the JCC Budapest - Bálint House offers rich programs to the community. They organise meetings that encompass generations, Jewish people and various perspectives, so that the participants can contemplate on their own Jewish nationality, communities, and society. The house was opened in October 1994 as the first community centre in Central and East Europe since the Holocaust. Ever since, it has served as the centre of Jewish community life in Budapest.

About its establishment: the JCC Budapest - Bálint House operates as a project of the Jewish Social Aid Foundation of Hungary. It was set up by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Britain's World Jewish Relief (WJR), the Doron Foundation, and the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (MAZSIHISZ).

About the name of the house: The Bálint family, who live in London but have Hungarian roots, have made a major donation towards the establishment of the house.

To achieve their missions they cooperate with Jewish organisations and individuals; provide high-quality services and programs to audiences of all age groups; organise forums for the open discussion of social, cultural, religious and political views. Their doors are open to all interested parties. The programs offered by the House promote a multifaceted and more tolerant world.

## **Micve Club of Buda**

Several hundred events are held in the Frankel Synagogue and the Micve Club every year.

The Micve Club of Buda is home to events on the occasion of Jewish religious holidays, such as Friday evening Kiddush, seder evenings, or fish dinners. The club also hosts weddings, memorial events, cultural programs, concerts, and card parties. The Micve Club is suitable for events with at least 100-120 participants. It has a kosher kitchen offering kosher cuisine only.<sup>78</sup>

## **Israeli Cultural Centre**

The Israeli Cultural Centre is the first organisation of its kind in the world. It aims to promote Israeli culture in Hungary with various community-building programs, as well as education

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<sup>77</sup> <https://www.zsidokulturalisfesztival.hu/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://frankel.hu/rendezvenyek/>

and entertainment events. They also hold motion picture screenings, workshops, Israeli lunch parties, and open days.

The language centre of the cultural institute offers Hebrew language courses with registration on the website.

An international networking and experience program titled “Heading for Israel” helps in the organisation of study trips, in career building, and in relocation. The program offers great network-building opportunities.<sup>79</sup>

### **Golem - the Jewish Theatre of Budapest**

Golem is first of all a theatre, secondly a Jewish facility, and thirdly a cultural entity of Budapest. The stage is the realm of emotions, and also an opportunity to reflect on a religion, a culture, a nation, an attitude, or all of the above. Running a Jewish theatre in Central Europe is an immense responsibility and challenge. Unlike community theatres, Golem targets all Hungarian audiences who visit theatre performances. For that reason, plays written in Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French or any other language are performed in Hungarian. The Golem Theatre Association also publishes books and translates works from Hebrew into Hungarian.<sup>80</sup>

### **Jewish Art Days**

Abbreviated as ZsiMű in Hungarian, Jewish Art Days were first held in Budapest in the spring of 2016. The event series presents the diversity of Jewish culture with various art performances at several venues in the capital city. Unique programs are not only held in major music halls and theatres but also in other cultural, gastronomical and entertainment venues in Erzsébetváros, which offer a more relaxed atmosphere.

The Jewish Art Days constitute a receptive multicultural space where various art forms are intertwined and united in a thematic programme series focused on Jewish culture. The genres involved include theatre performances, classical and pop music, literature, motion pictures and dance. Performances share an open and creative mentality. Quality is guaranteed by the list of reputable artists who are asked to contribute.<sup>81</sup>

### **Csányi5 – Jewish Historical Collection of Erzsébetváros**

The Csányi5 – Jewish Historical Collection of Erzsébetváros is a museum pedagogy program. Dr Gábor Balázs, intellectual historian and Tamás Foki, historian and teacher have helped develop its professional aspects. The goal is to encourage young people to visit museums, and

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<sup>79</sup> <https://izraelikultura.hu/kiutazas/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://golemkozpont.hu/konyvek-es-forditasok/>

<sup>81</sup> <https://zsidomuveszetinapok.hu/hu/zsimurol> (12.04.2023)

to teach them about the history of Jewry. While the Collection is not an official educational institution, it is an important platform for learning.<sup>82</sup>

Established by the Municipality of District 7 of Budapest, the Foundation for the Jewish Heritage of Erzsébetváros aims to support local education activities and safeguard the Jewish cultural heritage of the district. The Foundation also intends to research, nurture and celebrate the local traditions of Jewish culture.

### **Centropa Foundation**

Centropa was established in Vienna and Budapest in 2000 in order to preserve Jewish historical records in Central and Eastern Europe, on the Balkans, in the Baltic states, and in the territory of the former Soviet Union, and to provide wide public access to those records.

The project they launched did not involve interviews about the Holocaust. They set out to contact over a thousand elderly Jews with unbroken residence in this region to have them tell their stories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as they experienced it.

The interviews were not recorded on video. Instead, more than 25,000 personal and family photos and documents were digitised, and the stories of the interviewees were captured on 45,000 pages.

The Centropa interviews were conducted between 2000 and 2009.

Since 2005, interviews have been complemented with creating thematic websites, short videos, travelling exhibitions, education programs and books, all of which are based on archived interviews.

In addition, they have been making documentaries, mobile applications for urban walks, and podcasts in recent years.

Centropa aims to preserve, and provide access to the historical heritage of the Jewry, as well as to work out methods and solutions that promote the usage of the latest technologies in education.

Applying a unique methodology, they prepare innovative learning materials for formal and informal education, in order to contribute to shaping the relationship of future generations with the past, and to educating them in accepting diversity.

Their head office and creative centre is in Vienna. Their education teams work in Centropa's offices in Budapest, Hamburg and Washington; each office is a separate legal entity.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.erzsitt.hu/rolunk/muzeumpedagogia/>

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.centropa.org/hu/centroparol> (12.04.2023)

## **Haver Foundation**

Haver ("Buddy") foundation was set up in 2002. Using informal tools, the voluntary team of educators of Haver Foundation offers interactive lessons primarily to secondary school and university students. Their lessons are built on specific subjects such as Jewish identity, culture, traditions, history, religion and communities, as well as the Holocaust.

The Foundation considers it especially important that students should get acquainted with the human stories behind the schoolbook data, and think about the weight of historical dates and events that may only be mentioned in passing. The sessions are intended to allow young people to explore issues related to the Jewry and Jewish identity in an easily understandable and accessible manner, through personal stories.

Besides sharing and disseminating specific knowledge, the education programme of the Buddy Foundation helps acquire and develop key skills and capabilities such as critical thinking or civilised debates.

Since its establishment, the Buddy Foundation meets with 2-3 thousand students and teachers every year.

## **ZACHOR Foundation**

The ZACHOR Foundation for Social Remembrance is a civil education organisation. Through their pedagogical approach, education programs, learning materials and publications, they aim to help primary and secondary school pupils acquire historical knowledge and become more open to each other.

Their education methodology emphasises the pedagogical significance of a personal perspective. Their online and digital learning materials are focused on the development of various competences, on critical thinking, as well as on social and emotional learning. The education programs can be integrated into several school subjects in addition to history classes.

They intend to help the development of competences for the 21<sup>st</sup> century with digital education materials based on personal life stories, with school programmes, and with in-service training for teachers.

They consider it important for teachers, students and the general public to look back on past social events, as well as on the consequences of exclusion, racism, antisemitism and prejudices, with compassion, so that they should make decisions and act as active, compassionate people in their everyday lives.

Their programs include the following:

Historically themed neighbourhood walks using a smartphone application (Iwalk); tours with volunteer guides

Teacher training: webinars and accredited training for all teachers, from the first grades in primary schools to higher education, whether they work in Hungary or abroad

Art competitions for pupils aged 6-18, and digital competitions for secondary school students.

Specialised and student programs: Junior Intern Program, interactive travelling exhibitions about the Holocaust and the revolution in 1956; Professional Network of Teachers using Video Interviews<sup>84</sup>

### **USC Shoah Foundation**

The USC Shoah Visual History Archive Foundation was established in 1994 upon an initiative by Steven Spielberg. In view of the previous professional cooperation, the right to manage the Foundation was transferred to the University of Southern California in 2006. The ProQuest company group has been the exclusive distributor of the database since 2016.

In 2018, the National Electronic Information Service (EISZ) Program (operated by the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) concluded an agreement with the ProQuest Group about access to the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive. According to the agreement, 40 Hungarian public institutions may access the database. The costs allocated to the institutions are borne by the EISZ Program.<sup>85</sup>

The service is accessible at several universities, in county libraries, in museums, and in other research facilities in Hungary.

The Visual History Archive is a crucial source in researching the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation contains more than 55,000 interviews with genocide survivors and witnesses. The interviews have been recorded in 41 languages across 62 countries. The database contains 1,335 interviews conducted in Hungarian and several thousand interviews in other languages about Hungarian experiences relating to the Holocaust. In addition to recording the memories of survivors, the interviews also captured the recollections of witnesses, liberating soldiers, saviours of victims, helpers, and persons involved in war crime lawsuits. Every interview is a life story, so the archived materials are not only personal accounts of the Holocaust but also sources for overall 20<sup>th</sup> century social history.<sup>86</sup>

On 9 November 2022, the USC Shoah Foundation launched a thoroughly redesigned version of the Visual History Archive as a streamed collection of the video testimonies of genocide survivors.

The new edition of the VHA offers a transparent and responsive interface, simple and effective search functions, project management tools, as well as a tailor-suited control panel.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> <https://www.zachor.hu/> (12.04.2023)

<sup>85</sup> The Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation is accessible in Hungary, too. <https://eisz.mtak.hu/index.php/hu/246-magyarorszagon-is-hozzaferheto-az-usc-soa-alapitvany-vizualis-tortenelmi-archivum.html> (27/04/2023)

<sup>86</sup> Visual History Archive of the SOAH Foundation <https://brody.iif.hu/soa-alapitvany-vizualis-tortenelmi-archivum> (27.04.2023)

<sup>87</sup> USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive renewed <https://ppf.mtak.hu/index.php/hu/538-megujult-az-usc-soa-alapitvany-vizualis-tortenelmi-archivum-platformja.html> (27.04.2023)



## **Catering**

In Budapest, EMIH operates the Carmel Kosher Restaurant, the Tel Aviv Restaurant, the Saksuka Restaurant, and the Semesh Kosher Bakery. The Hanna Kosher Restaurant is operated by MAOIH. This is the only glatt kosher restaurant in Budapest that is run according to the rules of Orthodox Judaism. The history of this famous restaurant goes back to the early 1920s. Its menu is based on the traditional Hungarian-Jewish cuisine. The kosher market on Dohány utca serves the local community and tourists with kosher food. However, accommodation for religious tourists is rare.

## **Jewish life outside Budapest**

### **Miskolc**

The Jewish community of Miskolc looks back on a history of several hundred years. They started to create the main religious institutional framework as early as in the 1740s, and have played a significant social role since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>88</sup> Built between 1856 and 1863, the synagogue on Kazinczy utca is the only facility of its kind that is still used for its original purpose. While the synagogue is in need of major renovation, Jewish religious life remains active in the city, led by the Chief Rabbi of Miskolc.

First station of the pilgrimage launched in 2022, titled “Road of Jewish Heritage in East Hungary”, which showcases the Jewish heritage of the region. The Jewish Museum and Visitors’ Centre of Miskolc were built as part of the same program. The facilities have already attracted a social group. The exhibition presents the history, traditions and customs of the Jewry of Miskolc with a historical perspective, through personal as well as ornamental sacred objects, and contemporary photographs. The building block next to the synagogue on Kazinczy utca includes a prayer house and a kitchen. These facilities were also renewed recently.

Almost 80% of the Jewish residents of Miskolc lost their lives in the Shoah.<sup>89</sup> In 2021, Miskolc had one of the largest Jewish communities in Hungary, with about 120 families (300-400 persons). In the same year, 17 Holocaust survivors lived in the city.<sup>90</sup> The Jewish community of Miskolc is the centre of religious life in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county.

### **Győr**

Győr had Jewish residents already in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. As in most sizeable cities outside Budapest, the local Jewish community looks back on a history of centuries. In 1944, at the time of the Holocaust, about 6,000 people were crammed in the ghetto of Győr, some of them dragged there from neighbouring towns and villages. Over 5,000 of them never returned to their homes. The survivors, numbering about 600, tried to revive the local community, but the Orthodox faction disappeared by 1956, and the Neolog community also started to dwindle over time.<sup>91</sup> Finally, the Synagogue was acquired by the city municipality in 1968.

The Jewish Community of Győr and the city municipality still keep the memory of the Shoah victims alive. A memorial column was unveiled on the courtyard of the synagogue in 2007, with the names of the 381 children dragged out of the local Jewish school engraved on it. None of those children returned from the death camps.

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<sup>88</sup> <https://or-zse.hu/a-hagyomany-utjai-polgarosodas-es-vallasi-reneszansz-miskolci-izraelita-emlekeinek-nyomaban/>

<sup>89</sup> Csíki, A miskolci zsidóság a holokauszt időszakában, 345. In: A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve 40. (2001), 335-345.

<sup>90</sup> <https://akibic.hu/2021/01/13/zsido-imahazat-es-turisztikai-kozpontot-avattak-miskolcon/>

<sup>91</sup> <https://zsido.com/150-eves-a-gyori-zsinagoga/>

Attempts are made to revive and nurture Jewish culture in the city, which used to be exceptionally lively. Jews with ties to Győr, whether they live nearby or anywhere in the world, are invited to attend an even series<sup>92</sup> between 4 and 7 July 2024 on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Holocaust. The events include a meeting aimed at keeping the “flame of Jewry in Győr” alight.

## **Debrecen**

### **The Jewish Community of Debrecen**

Debrecen has Hungary's largest Jewish community outside Budapest, with almost 1,000 members. Most of the community that existed before World War II died in the Holocaust. Many moved to Israel or America due to the war and the communist regime. Two synagogues of the community have survived in the city, with the one used by the Orthodox faction built on Pásti utca in 1894. The other synagogue, on Kápolnási utca, opened in the autumn of 1910. It is currently used during major Jewish festivities in the autumn, as well as for weddings and various other events. Both synagogues were declared protected historical buildings by the relevant national authority in 2000. The religious community is still active and strives to continue local religious life and keep the required facilities operable, including a mikveh, a kosher kitchen (with meat), and Bét Din (the Registrar's Office of the Jewish Community of Debrecen). Minyan is held every morning and evening in the Bet Hamidrash on Pásti utca, and every religious ritual is observed according to ancient laws.<sup>93</sup>

### **Head Office of the Jewish Community of Debrecen**

The community purchased the current head office building in at 26 Bajcsy Zsilinszky utca in the 1890s. Various organisational units of the religious community operate in the building; offices, a kosher kitchen, the Rabbi's apartment, a cultural hall, a club for elderly people, and accommodation for pilgrims in the attic space. In addition, weekly meetings of the “Rachel” Women's Association are held in the building, along with rehearsals by the Zs-Faktor choir, and lectures by the Popular Jewish University of Debrecen.<sup>94</sup>

### **Orthodox Synagogue on Pásti utca**

The construction of the synagogue had started in August 1893, and the walls were standing a mere month later. That year, the Orthodox community of Debrecen started the autumn festivities in the new synagogue. The building was officially inaugurated in 1902; its first Chief Rabbi was Salamon Strasszer. Some institutions of the local Orthodox community were operated jointly with the status quo community. The Orthodox complex on Pásti utca has gained new members: the Beit Hamidrash was a venue for learning and prayer, while the cellar housed an Orthodox mikveh. A kosher slaughterhouse and shop were run in the courtyard. The last Orthodox rabbi of the synagogue was Sándor Deutsch. The building was designed by Jenő Berger, an architect from Debrecen. The main façade primarily includes

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<sup>92</sup> <https://mazsihisz.hu/mazsihisz/kozlemlenyek/a-gyori-zsido-lang-szervezodik-a-varoshoz-kotodo-zsidok-nagy-talalkozoja>

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.dzsh.hu/hu>

<sup>94</sup> [https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/debreceeni\\_zsido\\_hitkozseg\\_szekhaza](https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/debreceeni_zsido_hitkozseg_szekhaza)

Romanesque architectural elements.<sup>95</sup> The orthodox synagogue on Pásti utca was reopened in its full splendour on 26 April 2015. It now serves as a sacral space, as well as a touristic attraction and a venue for exhibitions, conferences and concerts. The Central and East European Jewish Education and Cultural Centre will also be installed in the synagogue in the near future.<sup>96</sup>

### **Synagogue on Kápolnási utca**

The synagogue on Kápolnási utca was erected in 1909 when a second building was needed for the faithful to have sufficient space for prayer and religious festivities. Jews living in the western part of the city had indicated their need for a new temple nearby which met the traditional religious needs of the community. Hence the construction of a new synagogue on a plot owned by the community, near the headquarters and the primary school, on Kápolnási utca. The synagogue was dedicated by Chief Rabbi Vilmos Krausz.<sup>97</sup> Designed by the László brothers, the building has sufficient capacity for 600 people. Its exterior is modern, while its structure shows elements of the Byzantine style. The building works were led by architect Lajos Erődi and carried out by local craftsmen. The building was used by the Jewish Secondary School of Debrecen until 1944.<sup>98</sup>

### **Prayer house (Beit Hamidrash)**

The prayer house was built in the early 1910s in the courtyard of the Orthodox temple. The heated building made it easier to study the Torah, because one could stay in longer, even into the small hours. This added a new dimension to Orthodox religious life in Debrecen, as people who worked on weekdays had an opportunity to learn. The Prayer House is still used for everyday prayer, but not for major religious rituals.<sup>99</sup>

### **Orthodox mikveh**

The old mikveh (ritual bath) is located in the Pásti utca complex, in the cellar of the old prayer house. It could not be used for decades due to high groundwater and scarce renovation funds. As part of a rehabilitation program, the bath was renovated based on the original layout and some of the original floor and wall covering. A kosher wine tavern and an exhibition hall was opened in the renewed bath.<sup>100</sup>

## **Holocaust memorial**

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<sup>95</sup> [https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/debrececi\\_zsido\\_hitkozseg](https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/debrececi_zsido_hitkozseg)

<sup>96</sup> [https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/a\\_pasti\\_utcai\\_orthodox\\_zsinagoga](https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/a_pasti_utcai_orthodox_zsinagoga)

<sup>97</sup> [https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/kapolnasi\\_utcai\\_zsinagoga](https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/kapolnasi_utcai_zsinagoga)

<sup>98</sup> [https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/debrececi\\_zsido\\_hitkozseg](https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/debrececi_zsido_hitkozseg)

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.debrecen.hu/hu/turista/cikkek/zsido-orokseg>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.debrecen.hu/hu/turista/cikkek/zsido-orokseg>

More than 6,000 names are inscribed on a concrete wall erected in the courtyard of the Orthodox synagogue on Pásti utca. Designed by young architects, the wall commemorating Holocaust victims from Debrecen was completed in the summer of 2015.<sup>101</sup>

### **Jewish cemetery of Debrecen**

Located on Monostorpályi út, the cemetery of the Jewish community in Debrecen has been operating in an unchanged structure since 1842. As the most important recent development, the data of the graves are now available online, in a detailed catalogue complete with images. That way, the data are available to all for research and general information.<sup>102</sup>

### **Kosher slaughterhouse**

The slaughterhouse used until the late 1980s now serves as an exhibition space and rest facility. That is where ritually slaughtered poultry was prepared for sale in the meat shop facing the street. Some of the original equipment was preserved during the renovation, and the meat processing phases are demonstrated. Guided tours are offered in English, Hungarian and Hebrew.<sup>103</sup>

In September, a Jewish street festival was held in the courtyard of the Pásti utca synagogue, as the most recent event organised by the Jewish community of Debrecen. Anyone could attend the festival that offered presentations about the history of the place, and about miracle rabbis. The guests had an opportunity to try a wide range of Israeli cuisine. Guided tours, concerts, and traditional Hasidic dance shows were also on the program. Interactive language programs were offered for children who could learn the basics of the Hebrew language from Israeli students. The participants had an opportunity to talk with Samuel Faigen, Rabbi of Debrecen.

The Challah Party was another event in the courtyard of the Pásti utca Orthodox Synagogue, where visitors got a taste of Jewish and Israeli cuisine. The food was accompanied by pleasant Hebrew piano music.

### **Szeged**

During World War 2, 3,095 of the 3,827 residents classified as Jews by the Jewish Council of Szeged were taken into a collection camp. As many as 8,617 people from the city and neighbouring settlements were rounded up and sent to the ghetto of Szeged. In July 1944, the trains started to roll, the first to Auschwitz, and the second and third to work camps through Strasshof (Austria). The ghetto on the territory of the local brick factory was emptied as Szeged was “cleansed of Jews”. Barely one third of the deported people returned after the war. The city of Szeged lost 5,452 people in WW2, including 612 Jews who died in forced labour, and 2,091 Holocaust victims. This was a tragic loss for the Jewry of Szeged, who numbered 4,161 at the time of the census of 1941.

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<sup>101</sup> [https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/holokausz\\_t\\_emlekhely](https://www.dzsh.hu/content/hu/holokausz_t_emlekhely)

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.debrecen.hu/hu/turista/cikkek/zsido-orokseg>

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.debrecen.hu/hu/turista/cikkek/zsido-orokseg>

Some of the people who had returned started to rebuild their lives. The years of communism caused a reduction in religious activities, even though the Jewish community survived and continued to function under the rabbi's leadership.

The local synagogue underwent minor renovation between 1979 and 1989, with limited improvement in its state. Established in the early 1990s, the “Foundation for the Synagogue” is actively seeking to help the community maintain and conserve the synagogue by organising charity events and boosting tourism. Organ plays and other concerts are performed from May to October. Also, the Autumn Jewish Cultural Festival of Szeged is held annually, with musical, art, literature and gastronomical events in September and October. There is a Christian-Jewish Society, and an Association of Hungarian-Jewish Fellowship aims to foster cooperation with the State of Israel.

New items have been added to the Jewish heritage sites of Szeged in the past 10 years: a Holocaust memorial column has been erected at the entrance of the former ghetto, and a menorah was installed at the entrance of the synagogue on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In remembrance of the Jewish residents of the city, the Szeged-Csanád County Diocese erected a statute in the Park of Solidarity on Dóm tér in 2014. In the National Pantheon, a statue is displayed to remind of the oeuvre of world-famous Chief Rabbi, botanist and folklore expert Immanuel Löw. At the same venue, wall plaques have been installed in memory of several renowned Jews of Szeged. Stolpersteins have been installed at last known residence of 20 citizens of Szeged who had been killed in the Holocaust. And the list goes on with other testimonies of the history of the Jewry in Szeged, which prove the current efforts at safeguarding the community's values and traditions.<sup>104</sup>

### **Nursing home of the Jewish Community of Szeged**

A nursing home has been operated in the headquarters of the Jewish Community of Szeged since 1950. The state-accredited institution for 22 residents is maintained by the Jewish Community of Szeged, one of the largest member organisations of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities outside Budapest. The home primarily offers accommodation and care to the decreasing number of Holocaust survivors across Hungary. They aim to guarantee their residents safety, comfort and professional assistance in compliance with Jewish rituals. The home runs a kosher kitchen that supplies not only the residents but also offers take-away food to external customers.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> History of the Jewish Community of Szeged

<https://szzsh4.wixsite.com/szzsh/a-hitkoezseg-toertenete>

<sup>105</sup> Nursing home of the Jewish Community of Szeged

<https://szzsh4.wixsite.com/szzsh/szeretetotthon>

## **The New Synagogue of Szeged**

The new synagogue and community headquarters were designed by Lipót Baumhorn based on a tender called in 1897. The facility originally seated 1,340 persons, but the current capacity is 1,200. The building is Hungary's second-largest synagogue, and the fourth largest in the world.

During World War II, the synagogue was the centre of the Szeged ghetto. The building was used as a warehouse for the storage of the assets of deported persons. Some of the people who had returned after the end of the war started to rebuild the lives of their own and their community.

A Menorah Memorial was erected in 2014, a year dedicated to Holocaust remembrance, in the garden of the Synagogue, with support by the Prime Minister's Office. The external reconstruction of the synagogue started in 2015, also with financial support by the government.<sup>106</sup>

The synagogue is a prime historical building in Szeged. Thanks to its excellent acoustics, classical and popular music concerts are regularly held there.

## **Kecskemét**

The furnishings of the new Neolog synagogue was destroyed at the time of the Holocaust, and the building was converted into a stable for horses. Only 74 of the more than 1,200 Jewish residents of Kecskemét survived the Auschwitz death camp and forced labour.<sup>107</sup>

The large synagogue which defines the cityscape was transformed into the House of Science and Technology in 1974, while the Orthodox synagogue has been home to the Hungarian Museum of Photography since 1991. The Wailing Wall of Kecskemét Jews has been standing alongside of the building since 1994 showing the names of Holocaust victims.<sup>108</sup>

Local religious life continued despite the tribulations of Nazism and Communism. The members used the prayer room in the community's head office near the large synagogue. The building section extended with a large prayer room was opened on 30 June 2020. Accommodating 300 people, the prayer room is a worthy venue for Pesach (to celebrate the liberation from slavery in Egypt).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Jewish Community of Szeged – the new synagogue

<https://szzsh4.wixsite.com/szzsh/a-zsinagoga-toertenete>

<sup>107</sup> *About the marble plaque on the new synagogue of Kecskemét*, Neokohn, <https://neokohn.hu/2020/07/04/a-kecskemeti-uj-zsinagoga-marvanyablajanak-margojara/>

<sup>108</sup> *Built Jewish heritage in Hungary - synagogues, religious buildings, cemeteries, shrines*, Cultural Heritage Protection Directorate of the Lechner Knowledge Centre, p. 13, 2020.

<sup>109</sup> *Large prayer room of Kecskemét Jewish community renewed*, Akibic, <https://akibic.hu/2020/07/01/megujult-a-kecskemeti-zsido-hitkozseg-nagy-imaterme/>

The restoration of the old synagogue to its original form is underway; the internal spaces of the building are currently renovated. Once the works are complete, a gallery of images related to Jews will be placed there.<sup>110</sup>

In 2018, Kecskemét (and Budapest) hosted the annual conference of the International Christian-Jewish Council, where cooperation between the representatives of the two religions was discussed. The speakers included internationally reputed scientists and church persons.<sup>111</sup>

A program series promoting Jewish culture is also regularly held in Kecskemét.<sup>112</sup>

Most of the original Jewish population of Kecskemét, about 1,200 people, died in the Holocaust, but the community keeps reviving day by day.

## Nyíregyháza

In 1840, Nyíregyháza allowed communities of Jewish origin to settle in the city. That was when Jews were also granted the right to engage in free trade, work in sciences and arts, and obtain real estate as private persons.<sup>113</sup> They had established their own cemetery already in 1843, and set up their own religious community in 1865.

At the congress in 1868-1869, the Jewry were divided into two factions, the Orthodox and the Neolog. But the Jews of Nyíregyháza did not join any of these factions. Ignác Friedman was the local rabbi from 1878, and they operated as a separate section. In 1905, the Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community was established. The Orthodox community built a prayer house and a mikveh. The synagogue designed by Lipót Baumhorn was inaugurated between 1922 and 1924.<sup>114</sup>

The Holocaust did not spare the Jewry of Nyíregyháza. In April 1944, 17,000 people were crammed into the local ghetto, and thousands of the local Jews were deported and died. According to official data, 4,753 of them were residents of Nyíregyháza. In 1947, the two denominations totalled hardly 1,000 people, with the number continuously declining.

In line with a fresh act on religions, the Jews of Nyíregyháza joined the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation (MIOK),<sup>115</sup> The reconstruction of community spaces started in the late 1990s, so that these facilities could be passed on to the next generations.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Old synagogue of Kecskemét to operate as picture gallery after internal reconstruction*, Magyar Nemzet, <https://magyarnemzet.hu/brand/orszagszerte/2021/01/a-belso-felujitas-utan-keptarkent-mukodne-a-kecskemeti-ozsinagoga>

<sup>111</sup> *Exceptional success: Hosting the World Conference of International Christian-Jewish Council*, Mazsihisz <https://mazsihisz.hu/hirek-a-zsido-vilagbol/mazsihisz-hirek/kiveteles-siker-mi-adunk-otthont-a-nemzetkozi-kereszteny-zsido-tanacs-vilag-konferenciajanak>

<sup>112</sup> *“Judakecs”: New program series in Kecskemét*, Kecskeméti Lapok, <https://kecskemetilapok.hu/kultura/judakecs:-uj-programorozat-indult-kecskemeten>.

<sup>113</sup> *Public life, Magazine, Then and now – A few lines about the Jewry of Nyíregyháza*, <https://zsima.hu/2021/01/24/regen-es-ma-nehany-sor-a-nyiregyhazi-zsidosagrol/>

<sup>114</sup> *Public life, Magazine, Then and now – A few lines about the Jewry of Nyíregyháza*, <https://zsima.hu/2021/01/24/regen-es-ma-nehany-sor-a-nyiregyhazi-zsidosagrol/>

<sup>115</sup> *Jewish Congregation of Nyíregyháza, About us*, [http://sofar-ujzag.hu/?page\\_id=5#\\_ftn1](http://sofar-ujzag.hu/?page_id=5#_ftn1)



## **Balassagyarmat**

### **Orthodox Jewish memorabilia - Jewish Collection and Exhibition Hall at the Ipoly river**

With a history of 600 years, the Jewish community of Balassagyarmat is one of the oldest in Hungary. Especially from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century until 1944, Jews played an important role in the culture of the city, as well as in the overall Jewish culture and Hungary's culture. Balassagyarmat offers some of the oldest memorabilia of Jewish culture, where visitors can take guided tours and cemetery walks to learn about Jewish religious traditions and history.

The Jewish Collection and Exhibition Hall at the Ipoly river was opened in 2000 through cooperation by the Balassagyarmat City Municipality, the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (MAZSIHISZ), the Hungarian Jewish Heritage Public Foundation (MAZSÖK), the East European Office of the Jewish World Congress, the Emanuel Foundation, and private persons. Several hundred primary and secondary school students have attended interactive lessons about the history of the Jewry in each of the past 10 years. In addition, hundreds of adults from all around the world visit the exhibition.

In the museum installed in the former prayer house, visitors can learn about the varied and often tragic history of the Jewish community and families that played an important role in the history of the city. The Orthodox cemetery is Hungary's first historic memorial site of its kind where information is imparted about Jewish burial rituals. The oldest grave can be visited, and commemorative events are organised about Holocaust victims.<sup>117</sup>

### **Kertész István Foundation for the publication of religious, cultural and historical heritage, and for the development of a Jewish collection and exhibition hall**

In 2021, the Jewish Collection and Exhibition Hall at the Ipoly river received HUF 3,593,063 of non-repayable, EU-funded development support.

The funds allowed the Kertész István Foundation to renovate and transform the former main sacral spaces of the Jewish community of Balassagyarmat. As a result, the previous exhibition was extended, renovation works were carried out, two multifunctional spaces were created, and the building became accessible. The outcome is a community space of several rooms that is suitable for training and presentations about local, touristic or scientific subjects, and also offers state-of-the-art hygienic conditions. The facility serves as a venue for increasingly popular domestic and specific international religious tourism, so that the visitors can get acquainted with the past and present life of a local religious and ethnic community that used to play an important role in the city.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Public life, Magazine, Then and now – A few lines about the Jewry of Nyíregyháza, <https://zsima.hu/2021/01/24/regen-es-ma-nehany-sor-a-nyiregyhazi-zsidosagrol/>

<sup>117</sup> Balassagyarmat - Orthodox Jewish memorabilia

<https://www.ipelrowing.eu/hu/program/balassagyarmat/following-orthodox-jewish-remembrance> (13.12.2022)

<sup>118</sup> Upgrading the display of religious, cultural and historical heritage; modernisation and extension of a community space for scientific information

## **International Jewish Youth Camp of Szarvas**

The international Jewish Youth Camp of Szarvas was founded more than 30 years ago, in 1990, by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the largest Jewish aid organisation in the world, in cooperation with the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation. The camp in Szarvas is managed by Friedman Sasha, who had visited the site as a child between 1996 and 1998, and then worked there. He has been managing the facility since 2006.

The participants spend 12 days in the camp, attending sessions and workshops led by trained and professional personnel. The facility aims to teach the participants about Jewish traditions, and to make them more open to the world, Jewish people, and their environment. The ultimate goal is to help the participants become active and positive members of the community.

Until 2019, the camp was run under the auspices of Hungary's Jewish Social Aid Foundation (MAZS) established by the JDC in 1990. The initial responsibility of MAZS had been the distribution of aid, but then they started to focus on the definition, introduction and systemic provision of service packages for the needy, as well as on relationship building and community life development. The foundation currently runs several programs in the areas of social support and community-building.

## **Balatonfüred**

### **House of Jewish Excellence**

This facility provides information about the lives of world-famous researchers and artists of Jewish origin whose achievements have contributed to the operation of the world as we know it. Information is provided in three languages at the scientific exhibition: Hungarian, English, and Hebrew. The material of art exhibitions is available in Hungarian and English. Besides factual data, interesting facts and stories are also included. The facility encourages visitors to remember the past, and it also expands their horizons concerning the Jewish community.<sup>119</sup>

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<https://balassagyarmat.hu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/TOP%202021.%20V%C3%89GLEGES%20S%20Z%20A%20K%20M%20A%20I%20B%20E%20SZ%20C3%81%20M%20O%20L%20C3%93%20SAJT%20C3%93NAK%20m%20C3%A9rf%20C3%B6ldk%20C5%91h%20C3%B6z%20KOMMUNIK%20C3%81CI%20C3%93S%20ANYAG-1.pdf> (13.12.2022)

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.zsidokivalosagok.hu/rolunk/>

## **Kőszeg**

### **Synagogue of Kőszeg**

This synagogue was built between 1858 and 1859 in the Romantic style. The construction was funded by Fülöp Schey, the most notable local Jewish resident, who was the first Jewish man to receive a nobleman's title in Hungary. In 1944, most of the Jewish residents of Kőszeg were deported to Auschwitz; only 16 of them survived. In 1951, the town's Jewish congregation ceased to exist, so the abandoned building slowly decayed. As neither the town municipality nor the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities undertook the renovation, the building complex was privatised in 1996.

After several ownership changes, the facility was returned to the state in 2016.

The renovation of the synagogue started in 2020. As the previous owners had not maintained the building, it was in poor state of repair.

The renovation took two years as part of the “City creativity - rural sustainability” (KRAFT) program of the Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg (FTI-iASK). The reconstruction of the entire complex (including the courtyard, the two annexed buildings, and the fence) was completed in 2022. The works cost HUF 650 million in total.<sup>120</sup>

The goal of the renovation was to keep and show as much of the original building and furnishings as possible.

Originally, the two annexes next to the synagogue had been the ritual bath to the right of the entrance, with the Rabbi's apartment behind it, as well as a classroom with the teacher's apartment on the left side.

The two annexes gained new functions: the teaching facility now houses an exhibition showcasing the origins of the Jewry of Kőszeg, the story of the Schey family, as well as the institutions and synagogue created by them. The other building is planned to serve as a reception area. The site of the former kosher slaughterhouse and ritual bath are not yet explored.

The complex offers thematic exhibitions as well as cultural and scientific events, while the central hall is a musical venue thanks to its excellent acoustics. After a long interval, the synagogue may now be used for religious rituals, too.

With two fortress-like towers, a cross-shaped layout and a unique interior design, the synagogue is truly special. An immense Star of David enclosing the name of the Everlasting God stands above the ark. The dome space features a Baroque-style painted pattern. The decoration is unique in Hungary and quite unusual in a synagogue.

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<sup>120</sup> *Renovated synagogue of Kőszeg to be opened at two-day event*, <https://akibic.hu/2022/08/25/ketnapos-rendezvennyel-nyilik-meg-a-nagykozonszeg-elott-a-felujitott-koszege-zsinagoga/>

In line with the objectives of the KRAFT program, Kőszeg may become a Central European hub of tourism based on cultural heritage.<sup>121</sup>

## Sopron

The earliest traces of Jewish culture have been found in Sopron, at Hungary's western border. Jews settled in the town some 800 years ago, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. For several centuries, they were at the vanguard of industry and trade development, and supported arts and culture. Jews also fought heroically and garnered medals in World War I, where many of them died. But all that was disregarded at the time of the acts against Jews, the German occupation, and a whipped-up antisemite sentiment.

Almost fully destroyed during the Holocaust, the Jewish community of Sopron revived in the early 2000s. The simultaneously recreated Jewish congregation initially had no prayer hall of their own. So the leader of the community opened a cellar room below his own home for religious rituals, and for the studying of the Hebrew language and the Torah.

August 2011 marked a cornerstone in the life of the Jewish community of Sopron, as religious services were once again held in the Old Synagogue on Új utca, after almost 500 years.

Since that time, the congregation has organised springtime excursions to destinations in Hungary and abroad, in order to boost community life and discover historical evidence related to Jews. Annual Jewish Dinners have been introduced as a new tradition. These events are now important parts of cultural life in Sopron. In addition, regional cooperation has been initiated with the Jewish communities in Szombathely and Mosonmagyaróvár. Later, the congregation agreed with the local municipality about the rental of a prayer room. About 20-25 people have attended Sabbath, while other notable Jewish rituals have attracted 30-40 participants.

In 2014, the 25-30-strong Jewish congregation of Sopron commemorated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Holocaust by organising a popular exhibition titled “Forgotten residents of Sopron”, and by issuing a book. As to its plans for the future, the community intends to expand further by reaching out to young people, as well as by finding residents descended from Jewish families, and involving them in religious life.<sup>122</sup>

The funeral home in the Jewish cemetery of Sopron was reconstructed in 2021, and a plaque has been installed in memory of Holocaust victims.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> „A mighty fortress is our God”: The past of the Kőszeg Synagogue, and the present of Hungarian remembrance

[https://magyarnarancs.hu/jo\\_nekunk/eros-var-a-mi-istenunk-a-koszegi-zsinagoga-multja-es-a-magyar-emlekezet-jovoje-120199](https://magyarnarancs.hu/jo_nekunk/eros-var-a-mi-istenunk-a-koszegi-zsinagoga-multja-es-a-magyar-emlekezet-jovoje-120199)

<sup>122</sup> Roóz Zoltán: Short history of Jews in Sopron from 1840 to current times, 14-15,

<https://docplayer.hu/5539230-Rooz-zoltan-a-soproni-zsidóság- rövid-története-1840-tól-napjainkig.html>

<sup>123</sup> Plaque in memory of Holocaust victims in Sopron, <https://akibic.hu/2021/07/06/emlektáblat-avattak-a-holokauszt-aldozatainak-tiszteletére-sopronban/>

The renewed Neolog synagogue was opened in Sopron in June 2022. Erected in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, this Gothic synagogue was unique in Europe. In medieval times, a Jewish hospital was in operation next to the building. That is where the new head office and synagogue of the local Jewish community were installed. The reconstruction works were supported by the municipality of Sopron, and then the facility was handed over to the Jewish community for religious and cultural purposes. The Old Synagogue of Sopron awaits visitors not only in real life, but also via a virtual tour on the home page of MAZSIHISZ. The online tour will hopefully encourage foreign viewers to come and check out the actual building, thus making an important contribution to tourism in Sopron.

Furthermore, money has been set aside in the municipal budget for preparations to renovate the town's other, Orthodox synagogue.<sup>124</sup>

The establishment of a sacral place proves the vitality of the Jewish community, and indicates their confidence in their future.

## **Jewish Community of Pécs**

Already before the occupation of most of Hungary by the Ottoman empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, people of the Jewish religion had lived in the city of Pécs. But they took a long time to return after the Ottomans had been ousted. In 1804, Márk Weismeyer requested a permit from the city council to establish a synagogue in his own house. His request was declined. Meanwhile, Salamon Fuchs, another Jewish resident of the city since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, died. In order to raise his orphans, Péter Engel moved to Pécs and married the widow of Fuchs, thus gaining ownership of the house at what is now 12 Zrínyi utca. It is in one of the rooms in that house that the Jews of the city gathered from 1825 for religious services. That function of the house continued until 1843, when the first synagogue was dedicated. Jewish religious life officially started in Pécs in 1840. That was when the first Chevra Kadisa statutes were issued and Izrael Lów, Chief Rabbi of Baranya County, took office. The zeal of the community is demonstrated by the fact that they had their own synagogue barely three years later. In July 1841, the community purchased a plot on Citrom utca from Ferenc Vitéz, and transformed the house there into a synagogue.

The Jewry of Pécs, too, suffered immense losses during the Holocaust. Only 228 of the 2,811 deported persons returned. In 1950, 18% of the pre-Holocaust Jewish population (of 1944) still lived in Pécs; the rest had died or moved away.

The religious denomination had been resurrected, but it has never regained its old strength and respect. In the first months following the war, the community concentrated on helping the deportees return and getting their assets back. Primary school education started in September 1945; only two pupils had been born in Pécs, the others were orphans from other towns. The nursing home was reopened, and the Chevra Kadisa was re-established in October 1946 under the leadership of Miklós Frankfurter and Lajos Gottesmann (Gulyás). József Schweitzer had

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<sup>124</sup> New Neolog synagogue born – Mazel Tov, Sopron!

<https://mazsihisz.hu/hirek-a-zsido-vilagbol/mazsihisz-hirek/uj-neolog-zsinagoga-szuletett-mazel-tov-sopron>

assumed the local Rabbi's position in October 1947; his appointment was finalised in March 1948. From that time on, religious services were regularly held, and Talmud Torah education started.

The students and teachers of the school on Fördő utca, about 110 of them, died in Auschwitz. Two young teachers were ordered to do forced labour, so they avoided deportation and survived the war. Between 1945 and 1947, the 30 students of the school were orphans from Jewish families in Budapest. The nationalisation of church-operated schools in 1948 sealed the institution's fate for good.<sup>125</sup>

The nursing home of the Jewish community of Pécs was built in 1938 for old and frail members.

The Jewish congregation took over the operation of the institution from the city municipality in December 2011.

Previously unprecedented reconstruction works started in 2014 when the congregation was awarded EU funding under two applications.

As a result, the nursing home received a kitchen suitable for the preparation of kosher food. Comfort and hygiene were improved as far as allowed by the constraints of the building: three new bathrooms were added, along with three wash rooms for disabled persons. And new furniture was bought.

In addition, the *art deco* building is now entirely accessible, the walls are thermally insulated inside and outside, and solar panels were installed on the roof. The windows were replaced, together with the water pipes and power cables, and the entire heating system.

Thanks to the project, some of the residents have learned how to use computers and the internet, which helps them keep in touch with family members far away. Finally, the staff of the nursing home attended training in order to improve the quality of service.

In 2015, the institution was named after Dr László Szántó, an outstanding physician who had treated the residents of the nursing home for 30 years through unpaid, voluntary work.<sup>126</sup>

The Dr László Szántó Nursing Home is a very open institution. That is why their family-friendly operating model was acknowledged with the [Good Service Award](#) a few years ago.

## **Jewish Community of Kiskunhalas**

Jews first settled in Kiskunhalas in the 1740s, when the town fathers favoured them over the competing Greek merchants. Jewish traders first appeared in the Kiskunság region of Hungary, and specifically in Kiskunhalas. In the flatlands east of the Danube, they mostly traded in wool, leather, and grains.

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<sup>125</sup> László Cseri: The Jewish community of Pécs  
<https://www.jelenkor.net/pecs/2003/a-pecsi-zsido-hitkozseg> (12.04.2023)

<sup>126</sup> The Jewish community of Pécs  
<https://pzsh.hu/2015/11/30/szeretetotthonunk-megujul-es-uj-nevet-is-kap/> (12.04.2023)

However, the settlement of Jewish people was restricted from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Over time, they were banned from renting shops and selling their goods on marketplaces; they could only peddle their items. Even though their illicit settlement was punished stringently, more and more Jews obtained residence permits. In the early 1850s, Jews rented 10 of the 14 stores in Kiskunhalas, operated nine of the 13 pubs, and were also involved in the rental of the local slaughterhouse. They provided one third of the town's income. Later, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were still primarily active in the trade and services sectors. Thanks to a surge in trade, the number of Jewish residents rose almost tenfold, to 400-500, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Due to the murders during World War II, less than 1% of the current population of Kiskunhalas (30,000 people) are Jews. More than 500 people had to leave their homes and were sent to ghettos from 22 May 1944. The number of Holocaust victims from Kiskunhalas was close to 300. Some of the surviving Jews left the country, while others tried to adapt to the situation in the town, or elsewhere in Hungary.

The first rabbi of Kiskunhalas was Szuszman Szófer from 1856. The local Jewry became a religious community, and the congregation's activities started. The synagogue of Kiskunhalas was built between 1857 and 1860 in the style of Classicist and Romantic architecture. The words "To God alone" are written on its façade. Indispensable religious facilities were located in the courtyard, such as the ritual bath (mikveh), apartments for the Rabbi and the cantor, a slaughterhouse with ancillary facilities, and an Israelite school opened already in 1856 under the leadership of teacher Móric Grósz.

The Jewish temple of Kiskunhalas is now the only synagogue in Bács-Kiskun county still in operation. The courtyard and its environs changed fundamentally over time. Religious activities are not performed in the temple and the transformed winter prayer house.

The town's 30-40 thousand residents of Jewish origin constitute an active congregation. Nurturing their traditions is the most characteristic activity of the community.

Duly commemorating the victims of the Holocaust every June, they invite a Rabbi and a cantor to orchestrate the service. These rituals are rendered even more memorable by a new tradition whereby community members present a short commemorative program.

### **Jewish Community of Nagykőrös**

Established in 1794, the Jewish community of Nagykőrös dedicated their own synagogue in 1818. That was the first time when a Rabbi (Salamon Krakkauer) delivered a sermon in the Hungarian language in a synagogue in Hungary. As the synagogue was destroyed by an earthquake in 1911, the congregation wanted to build a new one. After the hyperinflation following World War I, the collection of donations speeded up. The new synagogue, which is still standing today, was dedicated on 27 August 1925. It is the only Jewish religious building in Pest County to have continuously operated as a synagogue after the Holocaust, too.

The community survived the difficult years of government-imposed atheism, when most other congregations in the county were disbanded.

A memorial plaque is installed in the synagogue to commemorate the heroes who died in WW1. The names of more than 400 innocent victims killed in the Holocaust are inscribed on further plaques next to the Ark. In 2014, on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Holocaust, a marble board was added with the names of those who had worked to preserve the synagogue.

The Synagogue of Nagykőrös serves as a hub for Jews living nearby. The building is regularly maintained using donations by congregation members, and state funds. The Synagogue is also the seat of the Central Hungary Group of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities.



## 10. Cultural support

Representing Hungary's Government, the Ministry of Culture and Innovation is committed to the conservation of Jewish cultural heritage in Hungary. A series of grants awarded in recent years have contributed to establishing a conference of Jewish congregations outside Hungary, as well as to events like the Jewish Cultural Days and the Cholent Festival. In addition, funding by the Ministry has been used to start the reconstruction of the synagogue in district 15 of Budapest.

Also, the Ministry supports the realisation of major festivals in Hungary where Jewish culture is represented. The *Ars Sacra Festival* is aimed at helping people learn about the European culture based on Jewish-Christian traditions, and discover its rich variety through arts. The *Five Temples Festival* also employs art to make the audience more receptive to various religious denominations. As a special feature of the festival, the programs are located along a single street, within a distance of 700 metres, but in five different temples (a synagogue, as well as churches of the following denomination: Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Greek Catholic).

These popular programs contribute to the fight against all forms of antisemitism, as well as to the continuation and conservation of Jewish life, traditions and heritage. Consequently, the protection of Jewish heritage remains an important pillar of the cultural support portfolio.

Despite the current favourable situation in terms of Jewish culture and communities, further government measures are needed to curb and isolate xenophobic and antisemitic statements in everyday life (and especially in the digital space), as well as to create the conditions of harmonic coexistence without hate.

In the national strategy against antisemitism, culture plays an important role as an area that promotes the creation of networks between various communities, and allows people to get to know each other and find joint points of interest and aspirations.

Theatres, museums, libraries, cultural centres, festivals etc. constitute cultural scenes of targeted events and programs that convey, either directly or indirectly, messages contributing to the approximation of different ethnic or religious communities, so that they recognise and appreciate each other's cultural values, and can coexist peacefully during their daily lives.

### **PLEDGE**

The cultural segment of the government is responsible for promoting the maintenance and operation of various Jewish cultural institutions and organisations, as well for supporting their programs and projects financially. Future cultural projects are designed in view of the aspects and objectives in the strategy. Cultural governance bodies are ready to utilise the available intellectual and financial resources for the flexible promotion of strategic objectives in cooperation with other related areas.

## **World-famous Hungarian motion pictures about the Holocaust or the Jewry**

Below we list some of the acclaimed Hungarian motion pictures about the Holocaust and Jewish people.

### **Fateless**

“Fateless” is a movie based on a Nobel Prize-winning novel by Imre Kertész. It is directed by world-famous cinematographer Lajos Koltai. The descent of Gyuri Köves into hell is depicted not as a conventional story but as a string of episodes, a tableaux of mosaic pieces. The unfathomable horrors of the Holocaust cannot be condensed around any single dramatic moment, so the director shows faces, scenes in life, and small stories instead. “Fateless” is about the confrontation of an adolescent boy with reality, and about growing up in the darkest time in human history. Lajos Koltai faithfully followed the events outlined in the novel. The visuals of the episodes are consciously removed from reality. The meticulously detailed images are counterbalanced by intentionally monotonous internal monologues by the protagonist. “Fateless” is the movie adaptation of a crucial Hungarian novel. Its primary function is to bring the work of Imre Kertész to those who have not read the novel. The movie also confronts viewers with the historical facts of the Holocaust, a subject that must be kept on the agenda. The immense popular success of “Fateless” proves that the movie has met both objectives; it has been viewed in cinemas by half a million people.<sup>127</sup>

### **Son of Saul**

This movie used HUF 321.6 million of support granted by the Hungarian National Film Fund. HUF 3.5 million was earmarked for script development, HUF 7.5 million for the preparations for production, and HUF 310.6 million for the production of the motion picture. The Film Fund provided another HUF 4 million so that the makers of the movie could attend its world debut in Cannes.

“Son of Saul” garnered an Oscar Award in 2016 as the best foreign-language film. At the 68<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival in the previous year, it won the Grand Prix, the FIPRESCI Award of the International Association of Film Critics, as well as a Francois Chalais Award. In addition, Tamás Zányi received the Vulcain title awarded to the best sound designer. Both the Hungarian and international press received the first movie of a young Hungarian director with unprecedented enthusiasm and acclaim.<sup>128</sup> As director László Nemes Jeles put it: “Even in the darkest hour of mankind, there is a sound in us that helps us stay human. It is this hope that the movie conveys”.

Supported by the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Human Capacities, the Urania National Movie Theatre offered screenings of Son of Saul, the most successful Hungarian movie of recent decades, to secondary school students in the second semester of the 2015/2016 academic year. As an offsite curricular activity, the program was aimed at acquainting secondary school students with a movie depicting the past in a credible, albeit

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<sup>127</sup> Fateless <https://filmarchiv.hu/hu/alapfilmek/film/sorstalansag> (1 March 2023)

<sup>128</sup> Holocaust 70: Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014-2015, Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation

rather shocking manner. Between February and late April 2016, “Son of Saul” was screened 30 times for an audience of almost 13,000 students. The Urania Movie Theatre offered the possibility to attend the screenings to more than 100 secondary schools.<sup>129</sup>

### **Dawn Fever**

This is an adaptation of a successful autobiographical book by Péter Gárdos.

Support granted by the Hungarian National Film Fund: HUF 319.9 million, including HUF 2.8 million for script development, HUF 7.5 million for the production preparations, and HUF 309.6 mln for the actual production. “Dawn Fever” is a novel of real-life love. Five years after its initial publication in Hungary, it was discovered by major publishing houses around the world. The film recounts the touching story of how the director’s parents met and fell in love. They miraculously survived a death camp in Germany, and were taken to rehabilitation hospitals in Sweden in the spring of 1945.<sup>130</sup>

### **1945**

Ferenc Török's film is an adaptation of a short story titled “Homecoming” by Gábor T. Szántó.

Support provided by the Hungarian National Film Fund: HUF 333.9 million, including HUF 3 million for script development, HUF 14.9 million for the production preparations, and HUF 316 mln for the actual production. The movie by Ferenc Török tells the story of a single day. The events unfold in a small town in Northeast Hungary, at the beginning of the hot August of 1945. The country is preparing for the first free elections after the World War, while the town's residents are preparing for the wedding of the son of the local notary. In the morning of the wedding day, two unknown, religious Jews arrive with their strange cargo. Some of locals claim to recognise them as the first of Jewish residents who return after being deported one year earlier. Meanwhile, Soviet troops have arrived in tanks.<sup>131</sup>

### **I’m Not Gone**

The film was made in 2014, on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Hungarian pharmacist and industrialist Gedeon Richter. The film is special because it is not a conventional documentary. Instead, it presents the life of Gedeon Richter in 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungary, and his enduring legacy. Both the environment and the costumes shown in the film are authentic.

This outstanding film conjures up a special man whose unique mindset helped him cope with the challenges presented by science, business, and history.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Holocaust 70: Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014-2015, Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation

<sup>130</sup> Holocaust 70: Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014-2015, Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation

<sup>131</sup> Holocaust 70: Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014-2015, Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation

<sup>132</sup> I’m Not Gone <https://oroszlany.hu/media/hirek/2022/09/13/nem-tuntem-el> (01.03.2023)

Gedeon Richter was born in 1872. Hardly 30 years later, he established Hungary's first modern pharmaceutical company. After a few more years, his name was known in almost 100 countries of the world. The steady expansion of the Richter concern was halted during World War II. Based on Hungary's laws against Jews, the founder was stripped of his CEO title in 1942, and was barred from entering his plant. But he continued to govern the concern in a clandestine manner, through trusted colleagues. The operations of the plant all but stopped in the autumn of 1944, amidst fights in Hungary. The best professionals fled the country. With a certificate issued by the International Red Cross, Gedeon Richter could have left for Switzerland. But he stayed because he believed that he, a man whose life had been dedicated to healing, would not come to harm. During the terror of the Arrow Cross Party, he lived in an international ghetto under the protection of the Embassy of Sweden. Still, he was taken away and shot into the Danube in the night of 30 December or in the morning of the following day.<sup>133</sup>

### **Will and power - documentary portrait of 102-year-old Ágnes Keleti**

A film offering a documentary portrait of five-times Olympic champion gymnast, 102-year-old Ágnes Keleti, opened in cinemas in December 2022 as a movie presenting unique strength and a persistent fighting spirit. Filmed for over a year, the film depicts Ms Keleti's life through interviews, monologues, and historical records. Colourful animations help explore the various eras in the athlete's life.

Ágnes Keleti was born in a Jewish family in Budapest, on 9 January 1921. She had originally wanted to be an artist, but then gymnastics became her passion. She had a difficult life fraught with war, persecution, the loss of family members, and emigration. But nothing could take away her love of sport. She found her second home in Israel, where she lived for nearly 60 years. She laid down the foundations of gymnastics there, training several generations of athletes and coaches.

The film titled “Ágnes Keleti, conqueror of time” was screened first at the Cinefest of Miskolc in September 2022, and garnered the title of best Hungarian film according to an international board of critics (FIPRESCI). The documentary portrait was also aired on the Duna TV channel thanks to an agreement between the National Film Institute and the state media conglomerate.

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<sup>133</sup> Saviour of Hungary's pharmaceutical industry – Gedeon Richter was born 150 years ago

<https://www.magyarhirlap.hu/tudomany/20220921-aki-megteremtette-a-magyar-gyogyszeripart> (01.03.2023)

## **Jewish publications**

The number of Jewish publications rocketed after Hungary's transition to democracy in 1989.

The Hungarian-Jewish Cultural Association (MAZSIKE) launched the monthly magazine titled **Szombat** (Saturday) in November 1989. It is published 10 times a year. This non-profit magazine presents social, political and cultural aspects of Jewish life, with a section dedicated to Israel. “Szombat” is intended as a unique centre of Jewish information. The website [szombat.org](http://szombat.org) and the magazine's Facebook page serve as forums for dialogue between members of the Jewish community and society as a whole.<sup>134</sup>

**Neokohn** is a new publication focused on foreign politics. It is a conservative-liberal, Jewish news portal that also publishes subjective opinions. They intend to bring truly vital foreign and security policy events and processes closer to their readers in Hungary. Neokohn is not affiliated to any political party or side. The website is a news portal based on the values of the Jewish community, which the editors aim to strengthen. The site pays special attention to Jewish public and political life in Hungary and abroad, as well as to issues that are vital to Israel and the diaspora.<sup>135</sup>

Initially a magazine, “**Múlt és Jövő**” (Past and Future) is now one of the oldest publishing houses for books and other publications in Hungary. It had been established by József Patai in 1911, and operated until Hungary's occupation by Germany in March 1944. At that point in time, it was the primary cultural and artistic publication of Hungary's Jewry of almost one million people. It was then revived in 1988 by János Kőbányai who took advantage of the historical opportunity presented by Hungary's transition to democracy. The magazine branched out into the book publishing business in 1994; the number of publications is growing dynamically year by year. They publish literature related to Judaism written in various languages across the world, translated into Hungarian. Beyond subjects closely related to the Jewry, they are also involved in topics such as tolerance, multiculturalism, and non-fiction. The magazine itself is published quarterly around certain themes, as a collection of writings (anthology).<sup>136</sup>

**Kibic Magazine** is the only Jewish publication created through the collaboration of Jewish NGOs. The Jewish Community Forum Association, the entity that issues the magazine, aims to provide an opportunity to secular Jews to experience their identity. The Association also intends to support the integration of Jews into the majority society.<sup>137</sup>

**Új élet** (New Life), a bi-weekly publication of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (MAZSIHISZ), mostly carries reports about religious and communal life.

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<sup>134</sup> [www.szombat.org](http://www.szombat.org) (15.12.2022)

<sup>135</sup> <https://neokohn.hu/rolunk/> (14.12.2022)

<sup>136</sup> <https://multesjovo.hu/magunkrol/> (14.12.2022)

<sup>137</sup> <https://akibic.hu/> (14.12.2022)

**Új Kelet-online** (New East Online) is a Hungarian-language online political news portal from Israel. It also serves as the joint online interface of the Drory Israeli-Hungarian Library and the Israeli-Hungarian Writers' Association.<sup>138</sup>

Launched in 1991, the monthly magazine **Egység** (Unity) is the publication of the Chabad Lubavitch movement.

**Az utódok reménysége** (Hope of our Successors) is a Jewish religious TV program in Hungary's state media, made in cooperation with MAZSIHISZ. The program presents the life, religious traditions, as well as cultural and social activities of Jewish communities in Hungary and abroad. Rabbis convey ancient teachings related to religious holidays, providing contemporary guidance to the faithful living in our modern age.<sup>139</sup>

**Halljad, Izrael! (Hear me, Israel!)** This 30-minute program on Kossuth Radio is dedicated to the Jewish religion. It deals with social, cultural and religious matters of the Jewry. The editors demonstrate the varied and rich world of Jews. On-site coverage of the most interesting cultural events is broadcast, besides discussions with invited guests from the studio. The guests include scientists, public figures, priests, rabbis and artists, whether they are of Jewish origin or not - anybody who has an opinion about the Jewish people and identity.<sup>140</sup>

**The website of MAZSIHISZ** ([www.mazsihisz.hu](http://www.mazsihisz.hu)) offers up-to-date and wide-ranging information on Jewish religious communities and other topics relevant to the Jewry, such as cultural and civil initiatives, news from Hungary and around the world, support schemes, and news related to Israel. The website notes Jewish holidays and traditions, and provides interesting content on Judaism. The website and Facebook page of MAZSIHISZ is among the most-visited Jewish sites in Hungary.

**The renewing website of the Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary**, at [www.maoih.hu](http://www.maoih.hu), provides information about the everyday life of Orthodox Jews and their history in Hungary, and offers religious teachings.

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<sup>138</sup> <https://ujkelet.live/> (14.12.2022)

<sup>139</sup> <https://mediaklikk.hu/musor/az-utodok-remenysege-a-zsido-hitkozsegek-musora> (14.12.2022)

<sup>140</sup> <https://mediaklikk.hu/musor/halljad-izrael-a-zsido-vallasi-felekezeti-felora> (14.12.2022)

## 11. The Jewry and sports

As the primary legislative act governing sports, Act I of 2004 (hereinafter: Act on Sports) stipulates the general prohibition of incitement to hatred, and objects that may cause a scandal must not be taken to sport events. According to section 71(1)d) of the Act on Sports, a spectator may only be allowed to enter a sport venue if he/she does not hold any sign or flag that incites to hatred of others, or a legally prohibited symbol of dictatorship. The legislators did not deem it necessary to specify the prohibition of conduct violating sexual preferences, or insults about the racial or religious affiliation of others, or any other protected characteristic.

According to the legal consequences defined in section 71(2), the event organiser shall warn participants who jeopardise the execution of a sports event or the personal safety and property of others, or demonstrate racist, xenophobic, threatening or indecent conduct through unsportsmanlike cheering and encouragement, to abandon such conduct.

In addition, according to section 71(3), spectators who do not meet the conditions stipulated in paragraph (1) during the sport event or fail to abandon the conduct defined in paragraph (2) despite the organiser's warning shall be barred from entering or shall be removed from the sports event. The organisers shall order such individuals to present identification documents. Upon a failure to comply with this order, the organisers shall immediately notify the police requesting identification, unless otherwise provided by law. The organisers may restrain such individuals until the earlier of the arrival of the police or the end of the third hour after the police is notified, provided that such restraint is applied in the field of vision of a video recording device operated on location.

According to the Act on Sports, it is a basic task and obligation of the national association of the relevant sport to ensure the due performance of that sport in line with its characteristics, by issuing regulations, including discipline-related rules. Section 8(1)n) of the Disciplinary Rules of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) (hereinafter: Rules) provides that a footballer's public disparaging, negatively discriminating, defaming or insulting any person or group in connection with football, either orally or with a written display, figure or effigy based on race, skin colour, language, religion or origin qualifies as a disciplinary offence. These facts also apply to sports officials [Section 8(2)j) of the Rules]. The Rules of the Federation [Section 8(3)p)] provide that the spectators' or other participants' use of hate-mongering and/or racist expressions, display of boards (made of paper or other materials) with slogans or mottoes of similar content, or engaging in any misconduct involving negative discrimination or the instigation of hatred before, during or after the competition shall also constitute a disciplinary offence. This includes instances where spectators or other participants convey any message that insults the political or religious sentiments of others before, during or after a match. As a disciplinary measure, section 40 of the Regulation allows for disqualifying sports officials from 10 matches, or matches for 3-6 months. Depending on the circumstances of the case, a fine, the closure of certain sectors, playing behind closed doors or prohibiting the entry of affected supporters may be imposed on sports organisations.

Moreover, the By-laws of the Hungarian Football Federation stand up for countering the instigation of hatred by defining, in section 37, the procedures and sanctions for disturbing the

orderly conduct of matches and racist and xenophobic acts perpetrated by the supporters of a sport organisation.

### **Maccabi VAC Hungary**

Maccabi VAC Hungary is the only Jewish sports club in Hungary. They aim to increase the popularity of sports, and to use sport as a vehicle for strengthening Jewish identity. The club consists of several departments and caters to various age groups. Besides competitive sports, the club organises community events where both children and adults can try various sports in a friendly atmosphere. Every year, they regularly organise competitions, championships, demonstrations and festive programs where physically active families can have fun.

The club provides an opportunity to Jewish athletes to participate in international events such as the World Macchabiah Games held in Israel once every four years, or the European Macchabiah Games which are held at various locations.

Since 1989, Maccabi VAC Hungary has officially represented Hungary in the Macchabiah Games. Organised by the club, numerous athletes and sport managers travel to Israel once every four years to meet more than 9,000 Jewish athletes from 80 countries.

The Hungarian delegation to the World Macchabiah Games of 2017 was the most successful in the history of Hungary's participation.<sup>141</sup>

### **European Maccabi Games**

The European Maccabi Games were held in Budapest between 29 July and 7 August 2019. The program featured 63 events in 24 sports. About 2,200 accredited athletes from 40 countries enrolled, including 690 junior contestants. In addition to Jewish participants from Europe, athletes were also invited from the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Australia, and Israel. About 500 volunteers helped execute the Games at 12 locations, including the National Riding Hall and the Castle Garden Bazaar. The Public Service University's Ludovika Campus served as the central venue of the competitions.

The Government contributed about HUF 5 billion to the cost of the Games.

Security was guaranteed at all sites and along the transport routes by the Counter-Terrorism Centre, the Budapest and Pest County Police Headquarters, the security service of MAZSIHISZ, and the staff of a contracted security company. Hungary's security authorities also maintained daily operative contact with their Israeli peers. The patron of the Games was President of the Republic János Áder, who gave a speech at the opening ceremony.

Hungary was represented by 214 athletes coordinated by 20 coaches. Hungarians competed in 15 sports.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> <https://maccabi.hu/maccabiah/> (09.12.2022)

<sup>142</sup> European Maccabi Games draw record crowd of spectators in Budapest  
<https://www.origo.hu/sport/egyeni/20190607-maccabi-europa-jatekok-rekord-reszvetel-lesz-budapesten.html>  
(09.12.2022)



## 12. Pilgrimage and religious tourism in Hungary

### **Jewish Heritage Route in East Hungary**

Before World War 2, numerous Jewish communities lived in North-east Hungary, with world-famous Rabbis as leaders. The region had long attracted Jewish pilgrims from various parts of the world, but the spring of 2022 saw the completion of the „Jewish Heritage Route in East Hungary”, a pilgrimage trail for presenting the Jewish heritage of the region.

Created with HUF 1.4 billion of EU and government funds, the route connects five settlements, namely Miskolc, Sátoraljaújhely, Nyírtass, Nagykálló and Makó. The project was aimed at creating long-term, sustainable services for the conservation and presentation of the pre-war cultural, religious and historical heritage of Jews in Northeast Hungary, as well as at promoting the freedom of religion.<sup>143</sup>

The first station of the pilgrimage is Miskolc, and specifically the local synagogue with the neighbouring Jewish Museum and Visitor Centre. The institution presents the history, traditions and customs of the Jewry of Miskolc with a historical perspective, through personal as well as ornamental ritual objects, and contemporary photographs. A new prayer house, a kosher kitchen, and a spacious community space have been created in the courtyard of the synagogue on Kazinczy utca.

The second station is Sátoraljaújhely, a town that used to be a hub of Hasidic Jewry. Thousands of pilgrims flock to the grave of Miracle Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum every year. They are awaited with accommodation for 75 people and a prayer room. The renewed building also offers an exhibition equipped with modern technology.

A website and digital map presenting the 16 Jewish monuments in Sátoraljaújhely are also available in Hungarian and English, complete with descriptions and photos.<sup>144</sup>

A new pilgrimage centre has been established in Nyírtass to revive the traditions of the pre-war Jewish community. The building complex includes year-round accommodation, a conference centre, a ritual bath, a synagogue, a kosher diner, and an classroom. These are located adjacent to the grave of the former Chief Rabbi of Nyírtass.

In Nagykálló, the old Jewish cemetery on Nagybalkányi út still attracts Hasidic pilgrims thanks to the grave of Miracle Rabbi Izsák Ezékiel Taub, the father of Hungary's Hasidic Jewry. In order to conserve and interpret the intellectual heritage of the town, a house has been built for pilgrims, featuring an exhibition hall with modern technology, an event room, and an information desk.

The last station of the pilgrimage route is Makó, with an information point where the history of the local Jewry, as well as the lives and deeds of the Miracle Rabbi and other wise men, are

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<sup>143</sup> *Jewish Heritage Road in East Hungary – presentation of Orthodox pilgrimage sites*, <https://zsidooroksegutja.hu/a-projektrol/>

<sup>144</sup> *Jewish relics in Sátoraljaújhely*, Zemplén Region Enterprise Promotion Foundation, <http://ujhelyizsidóság.hu/zsido-emlekek-satoraljaujhelyben/>

conjured up with state-of-the-art technology. Notable graves in Makó's three cemeteries are also presented. An access road has been built to the Jewish cemetery in the northern part of Makó.<sup>145</sup>

The primary tourist attractions in Hungary are religious in nature. The Jewish cultural and historical heritage is an important part of Hungary's heritage.

### **Footsteps of the Wonder Rabbis**

The “Footsteps of the Wonder Rabbis” is Hungary's largest Jewish pilgrimage route. The 150 km long route touches 10 towns and villages as it winds its way through the Jewish memorial sites and the architectural heritage of the Tokaj-Hegyalja region. The start and end point of the pilgrimage route is the Jewish Cultural Information Centre in Mád. The Centre offers an interactive exhibition, a Kosher kitchen, and accommodation.

The route allows an authentic and fascinating insight into the habits of the former Hasidic Jewry of the Tokaj-Hegyalja region, and leads to the graves and life scenes of the most famous Hasidic Rebbes (spiritual leaders).

The pilgrimage station at Bodrogkeresztúr has recently become the most popular Jewish pilgrimage site in Europe.<sup>146</sup> The memorial house at the former residence of Miracle Rabbi Reb Steiner is a popular destination, and so is the Rabbi's grave. The town caters to the pilgrims with three boarding houses.

Stations of the pilgrimage route: Mád – Tarcal – Tokaj – Bodrogkeresztúr – Olaszliszka – Sárospatak – Sátoraljaújhely – Erdőbénye – Abaújszántó – Tállya – Mád.<sup>147</sup>

### **Synagogue on Dohány utca**

The synagogue on Dohány utca (usually referred to as the “large synagogue”) is the largest synagogue in Europe, and the second largest in the world. It is a flagship facility in Hungary's religious tourism. Interestingly, it was built on the plot of the former building where Hungarian writer Tivadar Herzl, who worked out the concept of today's Jewish state, was born. With capacity for 3,000 persons, the synagogue was built in 1859 in an ornamental eastern (Moorish) style.

Its size demonstrates the significance of the contemporary Jewry of Budapest, as well as their economic and cultural strength.

The synagogue is a temple of Neolog Jews; the innovations of the movement are evident in the architectural style, too. The Dohány utca building does not have separate prayer rooms for men and women; the former are seated on the ground floor, and the latter on the gallery. Similarly to a Christian church, the synagogue has an organ.

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<sup>145</sup> See: *Jewish Heritage Road in East Hungary – presentation of Orthodox pilgrimage sites (footnote 107)*

<sup>146</sup> *Coronavirus does not stop Hasidic Jews from flocking to „Miracle Rabbi's” grave*, Mandiner, [https://mandiner.hu/cikk/20210417\\_megjartak\\_bodrogkereszturt\\_a\\_zsido\\_zarandokok](https://mandiner.hu/cikk/20210417_megjartak_bodrogkereszturt_a_zsido_zarandokok).

<sup>147</sup> *Pilgrimage path*, <https://csodarabbikutja.hu/hu/madi-csoda/zarandokut>.

The building on Dohány utca was built in the former Jewish district of Budapest, which still has many residents of Jewish religion. The memory of the Holocaust is strongly connected to the old Jewish quarter. Dohány utca was the border of the Jewish ghetto at the time of World War II.

The synagogue is now primarily a venue for religious services, cultural programs, and concerts. It is open to visitors on weekdays.

An exhibition about the last ghetto of the era of World War II and the Holocaust is installed in the cellar of the synagogue on Dohány utca.

One wing houses the Jewish Museum. Its façade matches the style of the synagogue, while the internals feature the latest architectural style of the era. The museum has been established to present the Jewish community. Its permanent exhibitions show visitors the basics of Judaism, as well as everyday Jewish life and religious rituals, through metal and porcelain objects.

### **Garden of Remembrance**

The Heroes' Temple is the central element in the courtyard of the Synagogue on Dohány utca. Built to commemorate the 10,000 Jewish soldiers who had died in World War I, the Temple is currently a facility for religious services. The garden is meant to remember both war heroes and Holocaust victims. In World War II, the facility was part of the ghetto into which some 70,000 people were crammed and separated from the outside world with high walls. Part of the wall was later rebuilt as a memento in the courtyard. The local cemetery was established out of necessity, even though Jewish burial sites are not usually located next to synagogues. This is the resting place of more than 3,000 bodies found in the area upon the liberation of the ghetto.

The Monument of Martyrs has been erected in the Wallenberg Memorial Park, behind the Heroes' Temple. The steel leaves of the weeping willow statute are meant to commemorate the victims. As they have no graves to visit, many families have had the names of their relatives engraved on a leaf of the statue.

The Garden of Remembrance is a poignant and authentic Holocaust memorial site.<sup>148</sup>

(The Memorial Museum of Jews from Hungarian-Speaking Areas should also be noted due to its significance, even though it is not located in Hungary but in Cfát, Israel. The museum of the Hungarian Jewish diaspora has received significant financial support from the State of Hungary. Part of the exhibited items come from the private collection of the Lustig family, while the rest has been sent over the years by Hungarian-language Jews living in Israel and around the world.)

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<sup>148</sup> *Dohány utca Synagogue*, Jewish Tour Hungary, [https://jewishtourhungary.com/hu?gclid=CjwKCAiA19efBhAkEiwA4ToritnSmIrkwbLKSJAy1sJWa-mmvnZFofnRHJM9r394WB1EuG-ZS1CNxhoCYj0QAvD\\_BwE](https://jewishtourhungary.com/hu?gclid=CjwKCAiA19efBhAkEiwA4ToritnSmIrkwbLKSJAy1sJWa-mmvnZFofnRHJM9r394WB1EuG-ZS1CNxhoCYj0QAvD_BwE)

## 13. Scholarly and Miracle Rabbis

### **Rabbi Reb Steiner Saje**

Rabbi Reb Steiner Saje was born in 1851 in Zboro, Slovakia. He was an outstanding figure of Hungary's Hasidic Jewry and Europe's 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewry in general. He received high-quality education thanks to studies in the renowned yeshiva (traditional Jewish school) of Búdszentmihály. Then he went on to learn from Miracle Rabbi Friedman Cvi Hirsch in Olaszliszka. Rabi Hirsch appointed Steiner Saje as his successor. Steiner wanted to stay in the village, but moved to Bodrogkeresztúr due to persecution. A building in the courtyard of his house in Bodrogkeresztúr operated as a synagogue and education facility.<sup>149</sup>

People, including Christians, flocked to the Rabbi for advice; his kitchen supplied up to 50 people with food, so that no-one should leave his abode hungry. Legends capture his miraculous deeds; the armchair that Reb Saje hardly ever stood up from is also legendary. It is said that he lay down in his bed on Friday evenings only; at other times, he prayed or devoted himself to his guests and followers. He died in 1925, shortly after Pesach.

The Reb Steiner Saje Memorial House at the Miracle Rabbi's former residence is now a popular pilgrimage destination, and so is his grave in the Jewish cemetery established on the side of Derezsla Hill in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. An ochel (a tent shaped tomb) has been erected there by his admirers.<sup>150</sup>

### **Friedmann Cvi Hirsch**

He was born in Sátoraljaújhely in 1808. He was raised as a disciple in the house of Moshe Teitelbaum, a famous Rabbi of Sátoraljaújhely. After visiting several renowned Hasidic courts, he was appointed leader of the congregation of Olaszliszka.

His asceticism and selflessness soon earned him a reputation. He set his own salary at one forint, and all he asked was that his congregation should build him a house to receive his visitors.<sup>151</sup> The walls of that house had no foundations to stand on, as a reminder of the transitional nature of our life on Earth. He was so successful at spreading the Hasidic faith that Olaszliszka soon became the hub of that denomination in Hungary, and a pilgrimage site.

After the death of Moshe Teitelbaum, the Hasidic Jews of Hungary's counties recognised him as Teitelbaum's worthiest successor, which had a major impact on the development of the local denomination and the village itself. Rabbi Hirsch had a local synagogue built for 500 people in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>152</sup> Thousands of faithful Jews flocked to Olaszliszka to see him and talk with him.

He died in 1874. Sajele Steiner, his disciple who later served as the Rebbe of Bodrogkeresztúr, held his mentor in such high esteem that he visited the grave of Rabbi

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<sup>149</sup> <https://zsido.com/reb-sajele-akit-a-beke-vezereelt-bodrogkereszturra/>

<sup>150</sup> <https://csodarabbikutja.hu/hu/turizmus/tokaj-es-kornyeye/bodrogkeresztur>

<sup>151</sup> <https://zsido.com/a-liszikai-csodarabbi-evforduloja/>

<sup>152</sup> <https://obudaizsinagoga.hu/megorizni-zsido-emlekeket-olaszliszka-liszka/>

Hirsch in the cemetery of Olaszliszka at least once a month, taking the request notes received from pilgrims there. Throughout most of his life, Steiner signed his letters as the “servant of the Rabbi of Olaszliszka”.<sup>153</sup> The synagogue built by Miracle Rabbi Friedmann was destroyed after World War II, but his grave continues to attract pilgrims, especially on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Av, the anniversary of his death.

### **Dr Immánuel Lów**

He was born in Szeged on 1854 as the son of Lipót Lów, the famous Chief Rabbi of Szeged. After graduating from the local Piarist secondary school, he studied theology in Berlin, where he became a Rabbi.<sup>154</sup> As an outstanding scholar of his era, he was active in several fields; he was an internationally renowned orientalist, an author of works on cultural and religious history, and a keen botanist.

After his university studies, he served as the Chief Rabbi of the Szeged congregation from 1878 until his death. He taught religious studies to senior secondary school students in Szeged, directed the Jewish primary school, was on the Board of the Dugonics Society of Szeged, served on the local Judicial Committee<sup>155</sup>, was a Member of Parliament, and represented Neolog Jews in the Upper House between 1927 and 1939.

His primary achievement was in the field of botany; written for more than 10 years, his book, “The Flora of Jews” was an outstanding volume of cultural and natural history. The book was based on the author's knowledge of the Bible, the Talmud, Rabbinic literature, botany and philology. Immánuel Lów identified and classified plants described in Hebrew, Arami and other languages, and matched them with their general scientific Latin names introduced by the Linné system.<sup>156</sup> In addition, his language skills were exceptional: he spoke Hungarian, German, Hebrew, Arami, Turkish, Syrian, Arab, Persian, Greek, Latin, and Romanian.

He was considered as one of the best religious speakers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He also researched the history of Jewish-Hungarian culture. After the fall of the early Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919, he raised his voice against unlawful retaliation, for which he was sued in 1921.<sup>157</sup>

When ghettos were set up during the Shoah, 90-year-old Chief Rabbi Immánuel Lów was captured and deported. Catholic Bishop István Zdravec personally asked the Interior Minister to release Lów. Meanwhile, the wise Chief Rabbi was exposed to the horrors of persecution and then taken to the hospital on Wesselényi utca in Budapest, where he died blind and emaciated<sup>158</sup> on 19 July 1944.

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<sup>153</sup> <https://obudaizsinagoga.hu/megorizni-zsido-emlekeket-olaszliszka-liszka/>

<sup>154</sup> <https://mazsihisz.hu/kozossegek/nagy-elodeink/nagy-elodeink-low-immanuel-1854-1944>

<sup>155</sup> <https://intezet.nori.gov.hu/nemzeti-sirkert/szeged/szeged-izraelita-temeto/low-immanuel-low-immanuel-low-abraham-hajim/>

<sup>156</sup> <https://zsima.hu/2021/12/06/low-immanuel/>

<sup>157</sup> <https://intezet.nori.gov.hu/nemzeti-sirkert/szeged/szeged-izraelita-temeto/low-immanuel-low-immanuel-low-abraham-hajim/>

<sup>158</sup> <https://zsima.hu/2021/12/06/low-immanuel/>

Chief Rabbi Dr Immánuel Lów was an outstanding religious leader and scholar of his age. His bust was unveiled on Dóm tér in Szeged in 2004, on the 150th anniversary of his birth.

### **Mose Vorhand, Chief Rabbi of Makó**

Moshe Vorhand was born in Nyitra on 17 August 1862. He led the Rabbinic Council of his hometown for 25 years. He led the Orthodox Jewish community of Makó from 1912. Between 1913 and 1944, he served as Chief Rabbi of the Orthodox Rabbinate of Makó. He directed a renowned school on Vásárhelyi utca in Makó.<sup>159</sup>

Established in the middle of the 18th century, the Jewish congregation of Makó was among the strongest and most devout communities in the South Plains region. Its rank among Orthodox Jews was elevated further during the leadership of Moshe Vorhand. His main work is a book of Torah interpretations titled *Ochel Mose*. In late April 1944, he was falsely accused of receiving foreign spies in his home. The local gendarmery detained him, beat him up, and tortured him. His disciples managed to have him transferred to the Orthodox hospital on Vörösmarty út in Budapest, but he died of his injuries in the morning of 8 June, at the age of 82. He was buried in Makó's Jángor cemetery. An ochel (a durable structure above a grave) was built over his tombstone erected in 1946.

In awareness of his impending death, Chief Rabbi foretold the upcoming suffering of the Jewish people, and swore to plead to the Creator in the interest of the congregation of Makó. Miraculously, two of the three trains launched from Szeged to Auschwitz were returned and sent to Austria before reaching their destination, and many Jews from Makó were spared. It was only in Budapest, some towns in Northeast Hungary, and Makó that families and children survived until the spring of 1945. The feeling of camaraderie among the Jews of Makó lingers, as proven by a meeting of Jews from around the world in 1994, on the 50th anniversary of the death of Chief Rabbi Vorhand. The grave of Moshe Vorhand, who is revered as a Miracle Rabbi, is a major pilgrimage site for Orthodox Jews in Hungary.<sup>160</sup>

### **Moshe Teitelbaum (Rebbe of Újhely)**

Moshe Teitelbaum (Przemyśl, 1759. – Sátoraljaújhely, 16 July 1841), Rabbi of Sátoraljaújhely, “Rebbe of Újhely”. Promoter of Hasidism in Hungary, called the “Old Saint” by his followers. The miraculous instances of healing attributed to him made him famous and attracted many pilgrims. According to an urban myth, he supposedly healed the child Lajos Kossuth.

Moshe Teitelbaum's Yeshiva attracted people thirsty for knowledge from lands far away. He is credited for the promotion of Hasidism (the “pious” Jewish movement) in Hungary. Pilgrims from lands far away came to him for kameas. Once he was accused of giving kameas to convicted Jews that would supposedly help them escape from prison. But he said that those amulets would only free their holders from demons and not captivity.

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<sup>159</sup> <https://makoizsidóság.iwk.hu/userfiles/makoizsidóság/rav2.pdf>

<sup>160</sup> <https://zsidóoroksegutja.hu/people/vorhand-mozes/>

His healing was not limited to the Jewish congregation; urban legend has it that the mother of Lajos Kossuth took her child to see the Rabbi. He did not only heal the sicj child but also foretold his future career.

Many visited his grave; in fact, Hungary's border to Czechoslovakia was opened in the 1920s for free access by visitors. Thanks to his oeuvre, the Jewish community of Sátoraljaújhely prospered for long, reaching about 4,000 members before World War II. But almost all of the Jewish population of Zemplén county perished in the Holocaust; the current community consists of just a few members. Opposite to the tobacco factory, the concrete wall of the local Jewish cemetery, which is several hundred years old, is clearly visible along road no. 37 which leads to the town. A few stairs lead to the burial site of Moshe Teitelbaum, to a so-called ochel. The grave remains a pilgrimage site<sup>161</sup> for Hasidic Jews.

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<sup>161</sup> Moshe Teitelbaum (Rebbe of Újhely)

[https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teitelbaum\\_M%C3%B3zes\\_\(%C3%BAjhelyi\\_rebbe\)](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teitelbaum_M%C3%B3zes_(%C3%BAjhelyi_rebbe)) (21.11.2023)

### **III. Education, research and Holocaust remembrance**



## 1.Role of education in the fight against antisemitism

Hungary has accepted the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust as a binding instrument. Among other commitments, we have pledged to further encourage Holocaust education and remembrance, and to promote Holocaust studies in schools, universities, communities, and other institutions.

Hungary's Government pays particular attention to fighting antisemitism. A policy of zero tolerance of Holocaust denial and racism has been declared. Administrative measures are indispensable in the fight against antisemitism, but lasting results can only be achieved if children in schools get acquainted with the lives and customs of other groups and peoples who live with us. Knowing them is the first step towards accepting them.

### **Actions against antisemitism, and Holocaust remembrance, in public education materials and regulations**

Hungary's new National Curriculum was introduced in 2012, along with new specific framework materials based on it. The developers in charge of the new regulations concerning the content of education paid special attention to including Jewish history and conveying a positive message of Hungarian-Jewish coexistence in the National Curriculum, in the framework curricula for individual subjects, and in the schoolbooks based on them. To that end, the Jewish Community Roundtable and the "Action and Protection" Foundation have been involved in drafting the curricula and textbooks.

During the discussions, the parties identified the main points of Jewish history and coexistence which should be highlighted in the curricula and textbooks in order to strengthen the values of ethnic and cultural diversity. The negotiations with the above-mentioned Jewish stakeholders resulted in six modifications to the National Curriculum, and 52 amendments to specific framework curricula. For example, the notion of the Hebrew Bible was added; the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was added as a historic date; the role of the Jewish community in the 1848-49 anti-Habsburg War of Independence was added, along with the resulting collective indemnity payment levied; and Hungary's political and cultural life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was presented in a more nuanced manner. Naturally, the Holocaust and the events leading to it had been covered in the previous curricula as well.

According to the law, the Basic Curriculum must be reviewed and amended as necessary based on accumulated experience once every five years. As a result of the review between 2017 and 2019, the National Curriculum was amended in early 2020. Many of the values of the previous curriculum were kept, including the topics related to the Jewry. Jewish organisations have also been involved in working out the specific framework curricula based on the amended National Curriculum. The new system was introduced gradually, from September 2020.

The topic of Hungarian-Jewish coexistence primarily affected the curriculum and schoolbooks of history classes. Emphatic references are made to the antique Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian roots of Europe's culture, to the Jewish origin of biblical stories, to the interrelatedness of Jewish and Christian sources, and to the ancient state of Israel.

The history of Judaism in the Carpathian Basin, and the coexistence of Hungarians and Jews, are important aspects in history education and the related documents.

When covering the medieval period, students learn about the role of citizens of Jewish origin in the emergence and operation of townships, and also about the first signs of anti-Judaism. The relationship between Hungary's King Matthias and the Jews of Buda is discussed in connection with medieval cities in Hungary. The schoolbooks also note the construction of one of the largest synagogues in Europe during the reign of King Matthias. It should be emphasised that the rule of King Matthias signified the heyday of historical Hungary. "Matthias the Just" is among the most positively perceived figures in our history, so all facts connected to him are assessed positively.

Buda was taken back from Ottoman rule in 1686, after 145 years. The "Buda Chronicles" by Izsák Schulhof is a recommended source related to that notable event. Izsák Schulhof was the Rabbi of Buda during the siege. His chronicles present the life of the Jewish community in the two decades preceding the reoccupation of Buda from the Ottomans, and also during the siege in which his own wife died. The moving account of those tumultuous events constitutes a unique source demonstrating the life of the Jewish minority in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The participation of Jews in the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence, as well as the penalty imposed also on citizens of Jewish origin as part of the subsequent retaliations, are designated as a research task in the curriculum. The goal is to shed light on the involvement of Jews, and their support for the cause of Hungary's freedom.

The key role that Jews played in Hungary's civic transition is a subtopic in the discussion of history in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Manfred Weiss and Gedeon Richter are listed as persons that history students must know about. That knowledge may be verified at their secondary school leaving exams. Manfred Weiss, a citizen of Jewish origin, established a metallurgy plant on Csepel Island, south of Budapest, on land that was uninhabited at the time. The factory ensured the livelihood of many workers; Franz Joseph, Emperor and King of Hungary, recognised the merits of Manfred Weiss by bestowing a nobleman's title on him. Later, Weiss took a seat in the Upper House of Parliament as an example of Jewish emancipation. Gedeon Richter had founded the globally reputed Richter Pharmaceutical Company. Thanks to his wealth and connections, he could have fled to Switzerland with his family during the Holocaust. But he was unwilling to leave his factory and workers behind. He continued to manage the factory in a clandestine manner, despite a ban imposed due to statutory discrimination against Jews. His merits are undisputed. He was killed during the terror of the Arrow Cross Party in late 1944. Both persons deserve to be referred to as role models in course materials.

When covering the persecution of Jews in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, students learn about the roots of antisemitism, discriminating laws against Jews, the "Endlösung" program, and the Wannsee conference. Naturally, the Holocaust in general and the Shoah in Hungary constitute an important topic in history education. Many Hungarians were taken to Auschwitz during the war, and few of them returned. Secondary school students are encouraged to visit the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Budapest. This period of history is presented in line with European standards. In fact, Hungary's regulations go beyond that by requiring that the

description of the history of the Jewry should not be limited to that period and related only to the Holocaust, but instead offer a demonstration of their long-term presence in the Carpathian Basin as part of the state of Hungary. Consequently, all students can realise that it was not foreigners who were destroyed but Hungarian Jews, a religious community that had been living with us for long.

In fact, the discussion of the history of Jews in Hungary is not closed with the end of World War II. The curriculum notes that outstanding scientists, artists and athletes were forced to leave the country during the eras of both National Socialism and Communism due to their Jewish origin. Students learn about the loss that these events have caused Hungary.

Concerning the present period, Hungary's curriculum covers the establishment and development of the modern state of Israel, as well as the recent history of the Middle East and the current situation, so that young people should understand the roots of the complicated situation in that region.

In addition to history classes, related topics of the Jewry in Hungary and Judaism are discussed in other school subjects, such as Hungarian language and literature, citizens' studies, and ethics. As a result of the above, all students in Hungary's public education learn about the history, culture and religion of the Jewry, and are involved in fight against antisemitism. Education about the Holocaust gives them real knowledge and makes them resistant to views that deny or relativise the Holocaust.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has formulated the definition of antisemitism as follows: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." In the decision promoting the application of the definition, Hungary's Government called upon the Minister of Human Capacities, who was responsible at the time for public education, to examine the possibility of incorporating the definition of antisemitism in content-related rules, in the joint requirements of teacher training, and in output requirements. According to an audit report, Hungary's regulations meet the relevant requirements. The spirit of the definition of antisemitism transcends the National Curriculum, the specific framework curricula, and the documents used in teacher training.

New textbooks have been drafted based on the 2020 National Curriculum and the specific frameworks for individual subjects. It is very important to include content related to the history of the Jewry and Hungarian-Jewish coexistence in the curricula. However, students do not read general or specific curricula, so it is indispensable for textbooks to detail topics related to the Jewry with due empathy and in due detail, emphasising the attitude against antisemitism. For that purpose, the new textbooks have been developed in continuous cooperation with the Action and Protection Foundation. The collaboration continues and will cover schoolbooks to be developed in future.

## **Presentation of the Holocaust in teacher training and in the in-service training of teachers**

For successful education and effective content regulation, it is indispensable that future teachers should also learn about Jews and the Holocaust when they are trained, so that they are prepared to include these topics in their teaching and education activities.

In line with the foundations of Hungary's Fundamental Law, zero tolerance of antisemitic acts and phenomena, as well as the objective presentation and wide-ranging dissemination of historical facts about antisemitism, are manifested in common teacher training requirements.

The cooperation between Hungary and Israel in the field of in-service training offered to teachers about the Holocaust dates back over 20 years, and is supported by both countries. It was in 1997 that Hungary first concluded a cooperation agreement with the Jad Vasem Remembrance Centre on offering Hungarian teachers annual options to participate in training in Israel about the Holocaust. This opportunity increases the effectiveness of Holocaust education. The application scheme is intended to help teachers deal with Holocaust education through the usage of tools and methods provided by Jad Vasem. The study trip and training in Jerusalem are significant because both states consider ethics education as a priority. In addition to the subject of the Holocaust, the training encompasses the issues of tolerance and anti-racism, as well as proposed education methodologies. The program is still active; teachers can apply for participation every year.

## **Presentation of the Holocaust in school life**

Beyond regulating the curriculum, developing content and teacher training, extracurricular activities help enable students to express their thoughts and opinions. Since 2001, the 16<sup>th</sup> of April of each year is noted in all secondary schools as a *Memorial Day dedicated to Holocaust victims*. Schools have the discretion to decide how to remember the victims on that day: students may go on thematic walks, may visit the Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Site (with free public transport granted to all students) or other memorial facilities, may commemorate the Holocaust in their schools, or may watch films, organise a quiz or present research projects.

No report of discrimination based on antisemitism has been filed with the authority responsible for education in recent years. Where such instances, if any, occur, the director of the institution concerned is obliged to notify the competent authority and the maintaining entity.

## 2.Higher education

### **National Rabbi Training Institute and Jewish University**

The National Rabbi Training Institute was opened in 1877 based on a ministerial decree. As a secondary grammar school, the institution offered seminars in Jewish and secular sciences. At the tertiary level, students engaged in academic education in the Faculty of Theology. Hungary's transition to democracy in 1989 brought favourable changes for the country's Jewry, and enrolment in the Jewish University rose. Since 1999, the institute adopted its current name (National Rabbi Training Institute and Jewish University).

They currently offer seven faculties and one specialised course for graduates. The Doctorate School provides a PhD degree in religious sciences, and a habilitated doctorate title.<sup>162</sup>

### **Milton Friedman University**

On 11 October 2018, following 18 months of negotiations and transactions, the King Sigismund University was acquired by the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation (EMIH).<sup>163</sup> Initially established in October 2000, King Sigismund College was transformed into a university in August 2016.

Since the change in ownership in 2018, the official status of the university has been a “secular private university maintained by a church”. The institution operates based on the rules of the market, and offers courses in applied sciences.

Since the name change announced on 14 December 2018, the institution has been operating as Milton Friedman University, in line with the strategic objectives of EMIH. The family of Milton Friedman, a Nobel Prize-winning economist of Hungarian Jewish origin, had formally supported the naming, together with the foundation responsible for Mr. Friedman's intellectual heritage. Milton Friedman (1912-2006) was an outstanding economist of Hungarian origin in the 20th century. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1976.

In September 2022, the Ashkenazium Institute of the Milton Friedman University launched a new bachelor course called Jewish Studies, which offers two degree courses and an opportunity to learn the Hebrew language.

The Milton Friedman University will receive HUF 7.1 billion of state support until 2027 based on Government Decision 1212/2022 (5 April) on amending the agreement published via Government Decision 1666/2019 (28 November) (Status Quo Ante) between Hungary's Government and the Hungarian Unified Jewish Congregation.

Moreover, researching and teaching the history of the Jewry constitute important parts of **higher education in Hungary**. In 2015, the Faculty of Law at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University made Holocaust studies compulsory, while Judaism studies in the Assyriology and Hebraism Department of the Faculty of Liberal Arts at ELTE University cover the history, past and present, religion and culture of the Jewry. The National Rabbi Training Institute and

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<sup>162</sup> Short history of the Jewish University, <https://or-zse.hu/az-or-zse-tortenete/>

<sup>163</sup> <https://uni-milton.hu/tortenetunk/>

Jewish University concluded a cooperation agreement with the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty of the University of Szeged in December 2022: *“The cooperation between the parties is aimed at raising awareness of the following in university education: the cultural and artistic heritage of the thousand-year-old coexistence of Hungarian and Jewish people; the contemporary culture and art of Hungary's Jewry; and the remembrance of the Holocaust.”*<sup>164</sup>

## **PLEDGE**

Education is a basic pillar of the fight against antisemitism. It is in our common interest that future generations should receive school education that presents historical facts objectively and comprehensively. Our shared past includes centuries of growth for Hungary's Jewry, as well as chapters of coexistence that have spelled both prosperity and tragedy.

It is very important for our children to get acquainted with these chapters of history as thoroughly as possible, because many of them never meet with a culture and religion different from their own, or with the related customs and traditions.

Public education textbooks are compiled and introduced gradually, according to the specific rules based on the National Curriculum 2020. These materials are developed by the Education Authority.

The Education Authority continues to cooperate with the above-mentioned Jewish organisations in textbook development to ensure that topics related to the Jewry are interpreted most accurately in the process of education.

In a process that is the first and only one in the European Union, the Education Authority continues the past 12 years of cooperation with education experts of Jewish communities in the development of textbooks and content related to the Jewry. The goal is to maximise the accuracy of the interpretation of such topics in the process of education and thereby prevent the formation of prejudices in the minds of upcoming generations. As in 2012, 2016 and 2022, a working party of education experts from the Jewish community will be involved in the evaluation of Jewry-related content in new textbooks as part of the statutory review of the National Curriculum after five years. Proposals and remarks about the content can be discussed with the authors and publishers.

Since 2016, the Action and Protection Foundation has expressed its opinion on Jewish related content in textbooks as part of the regular reviews of the National Curriculum. Most recently, it expressed its opinion on textbooks between August and December 2022. Then, in March 2023, the Foundation discussed its proposed modifications with the Education Authority, editors and publishers. Nineteen of the 32 proposals were accepted.

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<sup>164</sup> <https://or-zse.hu/egyuttmukodesi-megallapodast-kot-az-orszagos-rabbikepzo-zsido-egyetem-es-a-szegedi-tudomanyegyetem/>

### 3. Memorial sites

Below we highlight the most of important of several hundred memorial sites related to the Jewry in Hungary.

#### **“Shoes on the Danube Bank” memorial**

The “Shoes on the Danube Bank” Holocaust memorial of Budapest has been installed in memory of the victims shot to death there by gunmen of the Arrow Cross Party. The installation is a work of film director Can Togay and Kossuth Prize winning sculptor Gyula Pauer. The victims were forced to stand and form a row on the embankment of the Danube, and were then executed. The location of the memorial site is symbolic. The 60 pairs of cast-iron shoes commemorate the Hungarian Jews killed by the Arrow Cross Party.

#### **The ghetto of Budapest**

In medieval times, the word “ghetto” meant a district where Jewish people bound by a shared religion and lifestyle lived. From the 15th century, ghettos were marked out by the local authorities. New ghettos for Jews were established by German authorities in the occupied areas of Eastern Europe during World War II. The deportation of Jews started in Hungary after our country had entered the world war.

The Jewish Council, a body of elected Jewish leaders, was notified of the establishment of the last ghetto in Europe, which was also one of the largest, in Budapest. The Interior Minister's Decree defining the boundaries of the ghetto was promulgated on 29 November 1944, and the area was closed off on 10 December. Almost 40,000 residents of houses marked with yellow stars were displaced to flats in the ghetto. According to the Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Foundation, the number reached 70-80 thousand in early 1945.

Masses of people died there due to substandard sanitary conditions. In December, 80-120 corpses were removed from the ghetto every day. Learning about the approach of the Red Army, the Arrow Cross guards vanished on 18 January 1945. The residents used the wooden boards of the fence for firewood. On Klauzál tér only, more than 3,000 unburied corpses were found upon the liberation of the ghetto. According to the Holocaust Documentation Centre, 70,000 people survived the siege and the Arrow Cross terror in the “large” ghetto, and another 30-35 thousand in the “international” ghetto.<sup>165</sup>

#### **Monument of labour service on Bethlen tér, district 7**

A monument dedicated to Hungarian Jews who died while on labour service during World War II is located in the courtyard of the synagogue on Bethlen Gábor tér and the former National Institute for the Jewish Deaf-Mute. The monument was unveiled in 2009.

It is wedge-shaped, with a closing stone cut out in the shape of a Star of David. The bronze shape of a clinging leafless tree stands in the middle. The inscription quotes a line by Miklós Radnóti, a Hungarian poet killed in the Holocaust: “... they stood unarmed on minefields...”.

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<sup>165</sup> Thousands of unburied corpses found upon Budapest ghetto liberation, Múlt kor, <https://mult-kor.hu/tobb-ezer-temetetlen-holttestet-talaltak-a-budapesti-getto-felszabaditasakor-20160118>

The wall of the monument refers to labour service sites, and it is also a symbol of narrowing living space and hopelessness.<sup>166</sup>

### **Monument of labour service on Teleki tér**

On 17 April 2016, the Memorial Day of Hungarian Holocaust victims, a monument of labour service was erected on Teleki László tér in Budapest district 8.

It is well-placed because the square used to be a hub for Jewish retailers and craftsmen, and Jews were deported in trains leaving from the Józsefváros station nearby.

The monument of labour service was designed by Dan Reisinger, a world-famous graphic artist of Hungarian origin who lives in Israel. It was erected by the Hungarian-Jewish Heritage Public Foundation.

The iron figures standing on a concrete base form the shape of eight ghost-like labourers. The monument is an expressive and touching rendition of the suffering and unavoidable death of labourers.

Inscription on the base in Hungarian, Hebrew and English: “In memory of the Hungarian Jewish victims and survivors forced into labour service, 1939-1945.”<sup>167</sup>

### **Memorial wall of the ghetto on Dohány utca**

The memorial wall on Dohány utca was erected in 2014, on the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust, in memory of the 600,000 Hungarian victims. Just a few short sections of the original ghetto walls have remained. The monument made of iron and concrete on Dohány utca is located exactly where the original wall used to be. It serves as the wall of the garden of the Bét Menáchem Jewish Education Centre.

The wall displays its message in three languages, outlines the main events of the history of the district, and also includes a psalm.

An interactive map shows notable Jewish cultural and religious institutions nearby, and also indicates the lines of the original ghetto walls and streets. Through keyholes, the visitors can view contemporary and current photos of apartment interiors, synagogues and people.

The monument is illuminated after dark, providing a unique experience.

The memorial wall is intended to commemorate the victims of the Budapest ghetto, look back on the Jewish communities that used to flourish here, and present the enlivening Jewish cultural scenes.<sup>168</sup>

The memorial wall garnered an Architectural Quality Award in 2015.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Monument to Jewish forced labourers*, Köztérkép, <https://www.kozterkep.hu/7351/a-zsido-munkaszolgalatosok-emlekmuve#>.

<sup>167</sup> *Monument of Forced Labour*, Memorial Day of Hungarian Holocaust victims, <https://holokausztemleknep.kormany.hu/kepgaleria>

<sup>168</sup> *Ghetto wall*, zsidó.com, <https://zsido.com/gettofal/>.

<sup>169</sup> *Ghetto wall receives Architectural Quality Award*, zsidó.com, <https://zsido.com/epiteszeti-nivodijjal-tuntettek-ki-a-gettofalat/>.



## **Alfréd Hajós memorial**

Applications were invited in 2020 for the creation of a sculpture of Alfréd Hajós. The monument was placed on Margaret Island, in line with the Olympic champion swimmer's intellectual and professional legacy.<sup>170</sup>

The outdoor statue reminds the public of the exemplary oeuvre of Alfréd Hajós, the first Hungarian Olympic champion in modern times. The work of art aims to express the ideas advocated by the swimming champion. The work titled „*Gold for Hungary's Dolphin*” is installed in front of the swimming hall designed by and named after Alfréd Hajós. The project was funded by the Hungarian-Jewish Cultural Association (MAZSIKE), with support from the Ministry of Human Capacities.<sup>171</sup>

## **Árpád Weisz memorial site**

The Hungarian-Jewish Heritage Public Foundation (MAZSÖK) created a site in memory of Árpád Weisz, an internationally reputed football coach.

The memorial is located in Eiffel Műhelyház at 30 Kőbányai út in Budapest district 10, the former home turf of Árpád Weisz' football team. He was killed in Auschwitz during the Holocaust.

## **Stolpersteine**

Many death camp victims have no grave or final resting place. For that reason, Gunther Demnig, a sculptor from Cologne, Germany, initiated in 1977 the installation of so-called stolpersteine i.e. small, cobblestone-sized memorials for victims of Nazi deportation and forced labour or camps, at their last freely chosen places of residence. In Hungary, the first stolperstein was placed in 2007. In 2014, on the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust, a government grant supported the placement of 200 stolpersteine. In the following year, 72 more stones were installed at several locations across the country, including Budapest, Szeged, and Nagykanizsa.

In July 2022, Gunther Demnig placed further stolpersteine in three more Hungarian cities. Before that, in 2019, 53 stones were laid down at eight locations, in cooperation with civilians, the Hungarian-Jewish Cultural Association, and local governments.<sup>172</sup>

The installation of stolpersteine goes on: they remind people of Holocaust victims in Gyöngyös, Pincehely (Tolna county), Győr, Miskolc, Abony, and many other towns.

## **Kőszeg - commemoration of labour service**

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<sup>170</sup> Sculpture of Alfréd Hajós to be erected on Margaret Island, [https://pestbuda.hu/cikk/20201228\\_hajos\\_alfred\\_emlekszobor\\_lesz\\_a\\_margitszigeten](https://pestbuda.hu/cikk/20201228_hajos_alfred_emlekszobor_lesz_a_margitszigeten)

<sup>171</sup> Winning submission to Alfréd Hajós statue application scheme presented, <https://alkotomuveszet.hu/bemutakozott-a-hajos-alfred-emlekszoborra-kiirt-palyazat-nyertese/>

<sup>172</sup> Gunther Demnig to lay down more stolpersteins in Hungary and Slovakia <https://mazsihisz.hu/hirek-a-zsido-vilagbol/hirek-lapszemle/gunter-demnig-ujabb-botlatokoveket-rak-le-magyarorszagon-es-szlovakiaban> (22.11.2022)

24 March every year is the day to pay tribute to the memory of several thousand people who died while coerced to provide labour service near Kőszeg. The memorial site and the surrounding area were renovated by the Ministry of Defence, the local government of Kőszeg and the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of the camps at Kőszeg.

## 4. Memorial days and commemorations

The most important commemorations related to the Holocaust:

### **18 January - liberation of the ghetto of Budapest**

The ghetto of Budapest was liberated on 18 January 1945. When the ghetto was set up on 10 December 1944, more than 70,000 people were crammed into the area bordered by Dohány utca, today's Kertész utca, Király utca, Csányi utca, Rumbach Sebestyén utca, Madách Imre út, Madách Imre tér and Károly körút. The ghetto existed for a short time, but the inhuman conditions there claimed many lives. Thousands of corpses were found in the area after the liberation.<sup>173</sup>

### **27 January - International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

The prisoners in Auschwitz were liberated on 27 January 1945. Almost half of them were Polish or Hungarian. A gruesome sight received the soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Front who were the first entered the Auschwitz death camp. There were dead bodies and ravaged lives everywhere. The United Nations declared 27 January the International Holocaust Remembrance Day as of 2006. That is when the victims are remembered across the world.<sup>174</sup>

### **16 April - Memorial Day dedicated to Holocaust victims in Hungary**

Ghettos were established in Northeast Hungary and the Carpathian Foothills from 16 April 1944. The first ghettos were set up in Beregszász, Felsővisó, Huszt, Kassa, Kisvárd, Máramarosziget, Mátészalka, Munkács, Nagyszőlős, Nyíregyháza, Sátoraljaújhely, Técső and Ungvár. Since 2001, 16 April is a Memorial Day dedicated to Holocaust victims in Hungary.<sup>175</sup>

Back in 2000, it was the first government of Viktor Orbán that declared the Memorial Day of 16 April. The first such commemoration was held in 2001. Naturally, public education institutions also commemorate the day to expose all students in Hungary to the national tragedy of the Holocaust.

The March of the Living in Budapest, in the second half of April, is a related event.

The Budapest March of the Living event has been held in Hungary since 2002. This massive march commemorates the displacement of Hungarian Jews into ghettos from 1944 onwards. The March calls to mind Jews, Roma people, people persecuted for being gay, resistance fighters and people who were brave enough to rescue the persecuted.

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<sup>173</sup> „Hatred has no place in our hearts” – commemoration on the 77th anniversary of the liberation of the ghetto of Budapest <https://hirado.hu/belfold/cikk/2022/01/17/a-gyuloletnek-nincs-helye-a-szivunkben-a-budapesti-getto-felszabadulasanak-77-evfordulojara-emlekeztek>

<sup>174</sup> International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Calendar of „the stormy century of Hungarian people” <https://turul.info/napok/holocaust>

<sup>175</sup> <https://sfi.usc.edu/exhibits/holokauszt-magyarorsz%C3%A1gi-%C3%A1ldozatainak-eml%C3%A9knapja-%C3%A1prilis-16-0>

## **August 2 - Romani Holocaust Memorial Day**

The Romani holocaust, called porajmos/pharrajimos (meaning “destruction”) in the Romani language, means the mass murder of European Roma people in the period of German occupation.<sup>176</sup> Based on a resolution passed at the Paris congress of the World Gypsy Federation in 1972, 2 August is a day dedicated to the memory of the Roma victims of the Holocaust. The date was chosen because SS soldiers had killed almost 3,000 Gypsies in the Auschwitz death camp in the morning of 3 August 1944.<sup>177</sup>

## **4 August – Raoul Wallenberg anniversary**

Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat, was born on 4 August 1912. He rescued thousands of Hungarian Jews from deportation during the Holocaust era. Wallenberg was last seen with three Soviet soldiers on 17 January 1945. He is seen as a symbol of humanism and self-sacrifice. On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, Hungary's Government declared 2012 as the Wallenberg Year.<sup>178</sup>

## **9 November - Miklós Radnóti Memorial Day**

Born Miklós Glatter in a Jewish family, Radnóti was a Hungarian poet. He was drafted into the army in the early 1940s, but was ordered to do unarmed work due to his Jewish origin. His death is remembered on 9 November, the date when he and 21 others were shot from behind near the village of Abda.

## **Holocaust Memorial Year**

In Government Decision 1213/2013 (16 April) on the execution of commemorations and programs on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary, the Government declared 2014 Holocaust Memorial Year. Various project elements were carried out as part of the Memorial Year, many of which continued in 2015.

The **Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Committee 2014** was established via **Government Decision 1005/2013 (10 January)** for the period between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2014, in order to duly commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deportation of Hungarian Jews.

The programs in the Memorial Year were aimed at wide strata of society, with special regard to young people. Consequently, major emphasis was placed on extending the knowledge of young people about the Holocaust. Schools were involved in these efforts, and teachers were trained. Furthermore, several initiatives aimed at scientific Holocaust research were launched during the Memorial Year.

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<sup>176</sup> 2 August: Roma Holocaust Memorial Day: <https://stuttgart.mfa.gov.hu/news/augusztus-2-a-roma-holokauszt-europai-emleknepja>

<sup>177</sup> Disenfranchisement, forced labour, ghettos and death camps: the dark shadows of the Roma Holocaust: <https://mult-kor.hu/jogfosztas-munkaszolgalat-gettok-megsemmisito-taborok-a-roma-holokauszt-sotet-arnyai-20210802>

<sup>178</sup> Raoul Wallenberg was born 100 years ago: [https://mult-kor.hu/20120804\\_raoul\\_wallenberg\\_100\\_eve\\_szuletett](https://mult-kor.hu/20120804_raoul_wallenberg_100_eve_szuletett)

The total budget allocated to the Holocaust Memorial Year was HUF 8,811,481,034.<sup>179</sup>

## **PLEDGE**

Our common memorial days remind us of the tragedies of the past, as well as great personalities of our history, the Righteous Among the Nations who dared to profess their principles and stand up to their fellow creatures. They gave us examples of humanity and faith. Their resistance still serves as a moral compass today.

We must likewise keep alive the memory of hundreds of thousands of our compatriots who were taken away and murdered during the Shoah. Families were torn apart; mothers, fathers, children, siblings and friends died, many of them without any chance for survival. The few who have returned continued, and still continue, to bear the scars of the horrific events of the Holocaust.

What happened 80 years ago must not be forgotten. Hungary makes sure that worthy commemorations will be held in 2024, too. Preparations for an event series titled “Holocaust 80” started in 2023. The events are coordinated by the Hungarian Jewish Heritage Public Foundation. The Government has earmarked HUF 1 billion from the central budget for the anniversary. Numerous events have already been executed in the 2024 Memorial Year.

## **Hanna Szenes Memorial Year**

Poet Hanna Szenes was born in an assimilated Jewish family on 17 July 1921. She emigrated to Palestine in 1939. She joined the British Army during World War II. As paratroopers of the Royal Air Force, she and four men were dropped by an airplane in March 1944, above an area controlled by former Yugoslavian partisans. Their mission was to organise and support a Jewish resistance movement.

She crossed the Hungarian border on 9 June 1944, but was captured immediately. She was brutally tortured and executed on 7 November 1944 without court proceedings, at the age of 23. Her mortal remains were buried on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem in 1950.

Her name is known almost everywhere in the world. Her works have been translated into more than 20 languages, and published in 50 countries. She is regarded as a national hero in Israel. Her life and courage are covered in school curricula, and are a subject in the exams closing secondary school studies.

An event series was launched in July 2021 to present the life of Hanna Szenes, a Hungarian Jew and Zionist hero, who had been born 100 years earlier. Over 100 Israeli paratroopers visited Hungary on the occasion of the anniversary. The celebration in the Grand Hall of the Stefania Palace and Army Cultural Centre in Budapest was attended by the ambassadors of Germany, the United Kingdom, and Israel.

As part of the Memorial Year, Hungarian students travelled to Israel in the autumn to visit the stations of the life of Hanna Szenes there, and to study her status of a national icon of Israel. Later, Israeli youth arrived in Hungary to attend a series of education programs.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Holocaust 70: Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014-2015; Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation, 2016.

(The Hanna Szenes House is situated in the Sdot Yam kibbutz, close to the ruined city of Caesaria, in Israel. That is where Hanna Szenes, an ill-fated Hungarian poet, resided during her emigration to, and after her studies in, Israel. Her diary, several letters, and almost 40 poems were left in her house in the kibbutz. In her memory, the civilians living in the kibbutz established the Hanna Szenes House, with a statue and a museum at her former place of residence.

### **Imre Kertész Institute**

The Imre Kertész Institute opened in January 2017 based on the Government Decision 1812/2016 (XII. 20.). It is operated by the Foundation for the Research of Central and East European History and Society.

The primary objective of the Institute is to nurture the local legacy of Imre Kertész, to safeguard his intellectual heritage and memory as a writer, as well as to publish his works. The Institute is responsible for collecting materials related to Imre Kertész. Also, since 15 September 2020, the Institute has held the right to publish all works by Kertész in Hungary.

Besides the works of Kertész, the Institute also manages parts of the legacy of Arthur Koestler, György Petri, János Pilinszky, and Giorgio Pressburger (György Pressburger), as well as the entire legacy of János Sziveri. They intend to make the works of Kertész and the other authors available to a wide audience, and they offer scholarships to translators and researchers in order to promote the oeuvres of the artists.

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<sup>180</sup> Hanna Szenes Memorial Year launched

<https://bennemeloeredet.hu/2021/07/31/hivatalosan-is-elindult-a-szenes-hanna-emlekeve/> (14/12/2022)

## 5.Reconstruction of Jewish cemeteries

Jewish cemeteries constitute parts of Europe's cultural heritage based on the relevant resolution 1883/2012 of the General Assembly of the Council of Europe. According to a nationwide survey conducted in November 2014, there are about 1,550 Jewish cemeteries in the territory of Hungary.

Hungary's Government decided to renovate Jewish cemeteries in Government Decision 1833/2014 (29 December) on the implementation of resolution 1883/2012 of the General Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The Jewish Roundtable decided on 9 September 2014 to assign the task of distributing the funds earmarked for the program's execution to the Hungarian Jewish Heritage Public Foundation.

By implementing the program, the Public Foundation aims to achieve the following:

- Preserving Hungary's Jewish cemeteries,
- Developments aimed at remembrance in areas previously used as Jewish cemeteries,
- Teaching the young generation about Jewish cultural heritage via school community service programs through which students can participate in maintaining a cemetery, or in the collection, processing and publishing of information about the Jewish residents of the host settlements.
- Extensive social involvement in learning about, safeguarding and conserving Jewish cultural heritage, through the involvement of people participating in public work schemes.

Hungary's Government granted HUF 468 million and 532 million for the reconstruction of Jewish cemeteries in 2017 and 2020, respectively. More than 100 cemeteries have been renewed in the two phases of the projects.

In addition to the above-mentioned project for the reconstruction of Jewish cemeteries, the following listed graves were renovated in the Jewish cemetery on Kozma utca in recent years:

- Alfréd Brüll, Brüll family (crypt right–3), in 2017
- Ármin Hegedűs (1/B–23–34), in 2019
- Alfréd Hajós (crypt left – 120), in 2019
- Béla Lajta (3/J–74–41), in 2019
- Béla Komjádi (3/C–11–23), in 2019
- Viktor Wittmann (5–1–23), in 2019
- Graves of soldiers who died in World War I. More than 300 graves, i.e. all of plot no. 12 and some of plot no. 32, have been renovated by the Defence Ministry under professional supervision by the Institute of National Heritage in 2015.

## **PLEDGE**

Cemeteries are basic facilities in the Jewish religion. Establishing a cemetery is among the very first tasks for a newly formed Jewish community. There are almost 1,600 Jewish cemeteries in Hungary, which demonstrates the long history of the Jewry in the country, as well as their definitive historical role.

Hundreds of religious communities ceased to exist after the Shoah, some immediately, and other slowly, over many years. Small village communities consisting of a few families were the first to disappear. They were followed by numerous communities in small towns that the few Holocaust survivors left after the anti-communist revolution of 1956.

From the perspective of Jewish cemeteries, this process was tragic, because often it was only the increasingly abandoned local cemeteries which testified to centuries of local Jewish life before the Holocaust. In many cases, the communities of the few survivors could not even maintain their synagogues, which were dilapidated and often had to be sold. And hundreds of cemeteries remained untended for long decades. The cemeteries were slowly overgrown with weeds, the tombstones started to decay, and many of them fell victim to vandals and thieves.

Against that background, Hungary's Government is proud that American Orthodox Jewish communities of Hungarian origin have repeatedly expressed their appreciation of the Government's efforts at renovating Hungary's Jewish cemeteries in recent decades.

In light of the results achieved so far, the Jewish cemetery reconstruction program will continue, as much as the available funding opportunities allow.



## 6.Synagogue program

Saving and renovating synagogues is important for religious activities, and also for the preservation of our built heritage.

Hungary's built Jewish heritage was created when Jewish communities settled in the country, i.e. as early as in medieval times. Synagogues are the most conspicuous buildings in that regard. Despite variations in age and architectural style, they all embody Jewish traditions and identity preserved in the diaspora. In each era, the newly arriving Jewish population brought new customs and synagogue construction practices to Hungary.

Synagogue construction peaked in the prosperous period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to accelerating acceptance caused by the Emancipation Act of 1867. Outstanding buildings were erected in terms of size, mass formation, quality and location, demonstrating the strength and significance of the Jewish communities creating them.

In 1869, Hungary's Jewry was divided into three groups: Orthodox, Neolog, and Status Quo Ante. This increased the variety of the appearance of religious buildings.

The age of prosperity and synagogue building lasted from the Compromise with the Habsburg Empire in 1867 until World War I.

That era of representative architecture was followed by decades of exclusion from the late 1920s, when hardly any new buildings were erected. World War II ended this process for good.

As the Holocaust decimated the Jewish communities and Hungary's Communist government was against religion in general in the 1950s, most synagogues were no longer used for religious services. Many buildings were destroyed; others survived but were used for unworthy purposes. But nowadays, more and more old synagogues are once again used for religious purposes, or take on cultural, artistic or museum functions, with renovation in progress in several cases.

The 162 synagogues remaining in Hungary serve the Jewish community or have been converted to other purposes.

Currently, 67 synagogues and prayer houses are protected historical buildings, along with numerous ancillary facilities such as mikvehs, denomination offices, and Rabbis' apartments.

Protected synagogue buildings can be categorised as follows based on their current utilisation:

- synagogues used for religious purposes (23)
- synagogues used for secular purposes (29)
- unused synagogues (15)

Most of the synagogues used for secular purposes are cultural facilities such as museums, exhibition or concert halls, libraries, village houses, or cultural centres.

## **PLEDGE**

Few countries boast such an exceptional built Jewish heritage as Hungary. Many buildings in and outside Budapest look back on a history of centuries. These prayer houses and schools, and especially the synagogues, are mementos of the committed and concerted work of the Jewry settling in Hungary, as well as of the cohesive force of the local Jewish religious communities.

Following the horrors of the Shoah, tragical demise awaited many of the synagogues as several communities disappeared, especially in rural towns. There was no-one to return to the synagogues, no community to gather, and no more religious services were held. Some of the synagogues went into state ownership after WW2 and were used for unworthy purposes, for example as warehouses.

Over the past few decades, Hungary's Government has made all attempts at restoring the old splendour of synagogues both in Hungary and abroad. It is crucial that the country's Jewry should be able to practice their religion in an environment that is worthy of their thousand-year-old traditions.

For that reason, the synagogue reconstruction program will continue subject to the available funding.

# Afterword

We can confidently state that Hungary is a safe place for the Jewish community. Jewish people can live in safety here; they can freely practice their religion and express their identity. The state of Hungary has a constitutional and moral obligation to ensure that. Hungary's Government considers several thousand years of Jewish intellectual and religious heritage hugely valuable for the entire society of the country. Nurturing that heritage and passing it on to the next generations is key to the survival of the Jewry. Hungary's Government remains a partner in that regard, and closely cooperates with the three established Jewish churches, as well as with other Jewish religious communities and NGOs.

The Government lays special emphasis on direct dialogue with the Jewry, and on the joint processing of our historical past. As part of that, we consider it important to disseminate information on the history and traditions of the Jewry as widely as possible. We are convinced that spreading such knowledge also allows for curbing antisemitism and the related negative sentiments.

We can be proud of the current renaissance of a flourishing Jewish culture in Hungary, where Jewish people and families feel safe and can nurture their heritage. With support from Hungary's Government, historical phenomena and facts related to antisemitism are presented objectively in state-operated and other education institutions. The Government has taken several measures in the interest of our Jewish compatriots in order to protect them from antisemitic violence and atrocities, including verbal exclusion or hate talk. Such adverse phenomena have assumed alarming proportions in some West European countries. In Hungary, the number of antisemitic incidents is declining year by year. Hungary is currently one of the safest countries on our continent.

The Government strives for constructive relations with both domestic and international Jewish organisations, thus promoting the safety of Hungary's Jewry. In conclusion, Hungary boasts a flourishing Jewish culture and is one of the safest countries in Europe, and our migration policy is an important factor in that.