



9. International Workshop for professional officers

on dealing with the past of Auschwitz burdened by violence

A cooperation between the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation and the Zentrum für ethische Bildung in den Streitkräften (zebis) [Centre for ethics education in the armed forces]

23 – 27 March 2020, Oswiecim, Centre for Dialogue and Prayer (Poland)

Idea for the project

Within the framework of the workshop, 30 professional officers from Poland, France and Germany are invited to enter a joint process of learning on dealing with the experience of violence and its consequences in the analysis of the present significance of Auschwitz, and to express their willingness to reflect on the subject matter in a way which is appropriate to the ethical seriousness of the use of violence.

Analyzing Auschwitz and its consequences – beyond the concrete case – gets an exemplary meaning for dealing with violence experience and its after-effects in general. Auschwitz stands for experiences having a lasting effect on the identity of our societies and on the identity of Europe. The different ways Auschwitz is remembered in the different contexts reflects the complexity of violent incidents.

At the same time the tensions created by the severe violence experience continue to exist in the different forms, contents, functions and ways Auschwitz is remembered by the various European societies. People must learn to understand this disposition to violence which has considerable explosive force. Only then it can be overcome and the prerequisites for a common European identity can be created which assimilates the differences without abolishing them.

The workshop wants to invite the participants to jointly visualize the experiences made in connection with Auschwitz and to reflect on the different perspectives and contexts of experience and interpretation contributed by the participants.

Special attention is to be turned to the specific challenge of a military remembrance culture when dealing with violence experience. Soldiers in particular bear responsibility for dealing with means of violence. In addition, they are especially exposed to the effects of violence. The joint workshop of professional officers from France, Germany and Poland is to be a sign of the endeavours to find a common military identity.

Program (Draft, Jan 2020)

Monday 23 March

- 03:30 p.m. **Introduction into the subject matter and the workshop**
Markus Patenka, Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation
Kristina Tonn, zebis
Dr Rafal Zytyniec, Historical Museum in Elk
Introduction of the participants
- 06:00 p.m. Dinner
- 07:00 p.m. **Remembering Auschwitz as an international challenge**
Dr Piotr Cywinski, Director of Auschwitz-Birkenau
Memorial Site.

Tuesday 24 March

The camp

- 07:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
07:30 a.m. Breakfast
- 08:40 a.m. Departure to the **Guided tour through the basic camp Auschwitz I**
- 01:00 p.m. Lunch
- 01:45 p.m. Departure to the **Guided tour through Birkenau**
- 06:00 p.m. Dinner
- 07:00 p.m. **Exchange in small groups and plenary session**

Wednesday 25 March

Violence experience: Survivors and offenders

- 07:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
08:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 09:30 a.m. **Meeting with survivors**
- 01:00 p.m. Lunch
- 01:45 p.m. Departure to the **visit of Marian Kolodziej exhibition**
Father Dr Manfred Deselaers, CDiM
- 03:45 p.m. Coffee/ Tea
- 04:00 p.m. **The lasting impact of traumatisation**
N.N.
- Discussion in plenary
- 06:00 p.m. Dinner

07:00 p.m. **Becoming an offender – being an offender. Experiences with stories of offenders**
Dr Sara Berger, Researcher at Fondazione Museo della Shoah, Roma/ Italy

Discussion in plenary

Thursday 26 March Dealing with history as a challenge

07:30 a.m. Celebration of the Eucharist

08:00 a.m. Breakfast

09:00 a.m. **Remembrance and the present time. On dealing with the tension-filled diversity of remembrance of Auschwitz and World War II in Germany and Poland**

Elke Gryglewski, Gedenk- und Bildungstätte Haus der Wannsee Konferenz

Dr Robert Zurek, Foundation Kreisau

11:00 a.m. Coffee/ Tea

Discussion in plenary

01:00 p.m. Lunch

02:00 p.m. Departure to Oswiecim

Visit to the Synagogue, the Jewish Center and the historic Market Square

06:00 p.m. Departure for the Act of commemoration at Auschwitz Memorial

group photo

07:30 p.m. **Festive dinner with musical accompaniment**

Friday 27 March

08:00 a.m. Breakfast

Departure

Conference languages: French, Polish and German in plenary. English in working groups.