

European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI)

The sources that provide information on the Holocaust are diverse and geographically dispersed. Combined, all these collections – regardless of their scope and accessibility – are necessary to form a more complete picture. Whether a diary is located in a box in the attic of a small initiative or in the vast archives of an established institution is irrelevant: all sorts of objects and documents shed light not only on the Holocaust at large, but also on single events and personal stories.

Since its inception in 2010, EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) has been enabling and encouraging scholarly research on the Holocaust along transnational lines. EHRI's focus has been to integrate archival descriptions from institutions all over the European continent, Israel and the United States. This resulted in the establishment of the EHRI Portal, which to date provides an integrated search across 325.474 archival descriptions from 761 institutions.

EHRI has made great strides by working with large-scale institutions. Yet, we have always been aware that to cover the material legacy of the Holocaust, we need to incorporate the abundant material in smaller archival collections.

Therefore, EHRI continues to broaden its scope. Starting this year, a major focus will be to create opportunities for cooperation with micro-archival entities and the integration of their collections to the research infrastructure. In what follows, we would like to introduce EHRI's new activities with regard to micro-archives and invite you to get in touch with us.

Micro-archives and EHRI

The interest in hidden archival collections outside larger institutions has grown steadily over the past years. Researchers are interested in discovering first-hand information that can shed new light on historical events. Moreover, holdings of smaller grass-roots organisations or private initiatives can complement, refine and critically scrutinize specific narratives of the past. Hence, EHRI considers it essential to join forces and cooperate closely with micro-archives.

In the context of our project, a micro-archive is:

- an association, a memorial, a grassroots initiative, a very small archival institution, a researcher, a relative or a family;



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- a private initiative that is not run by local authorities or by the state, but by non-professional curators, i.e. engaged researchers or lay persons (not archivists, librarians, curators or the like);
- not a recipient of any substantial support from public means.

Of course, the holdings of the micro-archives also need to be relevant to EHRI, for instance:

- lists, cards, files, interviews, photographs, films, or letters related to the Holocaust;
- collections assembled during the Holocaust and/or after liberation, also if recently;
- collections should not have been integrated into larger archives yet.

Micro-archival collections that have found their way into other archives or memorial institutions, or have even developed into an institution are not micro-archives as we understand them.

If the information above applies to a micro-archive you are familiar with, we would be glad to be in contact with you to explore possibilities for further cooperation.

How can EHRI assist micro-archives?

Many institutions holding collections related to the Holocaust work with a similar mission: to preserve the material legacy as a testimony for current and future generations about this dark period of history, to remember the victims, and to caution about the atrocities humans are capable of committing.

To support this global endeavour, it has been EHRI's goal to assist archives throughout Europe and the world in making important records accessible. EHRI provides an easy to search digital platform to swiftly find archival collections located in different locations. We aim at increasing the scientific audience and public interest in these important archival collections, as well as at integrating additional archival data in order to make the links between the documents visible, and to enrich the stories these sources can tell.

The past decade has shown us that the archival and technical expertise among institutions varies a lot, therefore, close cooperation and learning from each other has been the foundation of EHRI's activities. We would be glad to apply our knowledge around digital



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collection integration to your micro-archival collection and invite you to become part of the EHRI network by integrating your micro-archival collection into our portal. Together, we can develop and apply strategies to safeguard your collection(s) for future generations and make them accessible to researchers and the public at large.

Get in touch!

If your archival collection - or someone else's collection you are aware of - applies to our definition of a micro-archive and the collection relates to the Holocaust, we would like to hear from you!

Please contact us via micro-archives@ehri-project.eu with:

- a brief description of the archival initiative you are either part of or know about;
- some information on the history of the collection, profile, scope (a historical event, a family's biography, faith of a community, etc.) and scale of the collection (types and number of documents);
- if relevant: an explanation of the archival and/or technical structure that has been applied, such as the descriptive standard (e.g. IASD(G) or EAD);
- your contact information.

Let us know how to be in touch (email, phone, postal mail) and you can expect a message from our side soon!



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