

IMPACT ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HISTORICAL MEMORY INITIATIVES, INCLUDING THE HOLOCAUST AND THE SOVIET OCCUPATION

AIM OF THE STUDY

Prepare an impact analysis of the implementation of historical memory initiatives, including on the Holocaust and the Soviet occupation, and proposals for improving the effectiveness of the implementation and coordination mechanism of these initiatives.

PARTS OF THE STUDY

- Evaluation of the organisation and coordination mechanisms for public holidays, commemorative days and commemorative years;
- Overview of the current situation, analysis of public research;
- Study on the evaluation of historical memory initiatives;
- Evaluation of funded historical memory initiatives;
- German (Nazi) and Soviet occupations;
- Overview of practice in foreign countries;
- Identifying methods to increase the impact of public and commemorative days.

THE ORGANISATION OF PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, COMMEMORATIVE DAYS AND COMMEMORATIVE YEARS

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COMMISSIONS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN COORDINATING THE CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND COMMEMORATIVE YEARS

Meanwhile, the initiation, preparation and implementation of commemorative programmes are based on the established practice of the responsible authorities, which are poorly regulated and lack a coordinating structure.

A LARGE NUMBER OF HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

This makes national commemorations complex and difficult to implement, as there are basically 7 major days of remembrance.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FUNDING FOR HISTORICAL MEMORY INITIATIVES COMES FROM THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, THE CHANCELLERY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA AND THE LITHUANIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISATION

STRATEGIC, LEGAL DOCUMENTS

In order to ensure more effective implementation and coordination of these initiatives, it would be appropriate to harmonise / adjust / add to the strategic, legal and other documents relating to public holidays, commemorative days and commemorative years.

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

There is a need to streamline the coordination of commemorations by creating an inter-institutional commemorations commission or by considering other alternatives (assigning the function of coordinating commemorations to existing commissions or to other bodies responsible for commemorating the most important historical dates of the country).

SYSTEM FOR COMMEMORATING DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

Due to the large number of historically important commemorative days, it is recommended that a system of commemorating such commemorative days should be established in which one part of the commemorative days (the most important ones) would be commemorated and implemented at the national level, while the implementation of the other part of the commemorative days would be entrusted to the most relevant institutions, bodies and organisations.

OPTIMISING THE COORDINATION OF COMMEMORATION PROGRAMMES

Preparation of "conceptual" or extended programmes for historically significant commemorations, defining the aims and objectives, the impact to be achieved on society, thus defining the direction and content of the commemorations of the public holidays / commemorative days / years, and forming a co-national position. Such programmes would also be useful in ensuring better coordination of initiatives by local organisers.

It is recommended that reports on the implementation of the commemorative programmes should be drawn up, summarising the activities carried out and the funds allocated to them, the number of participants / spectators attracted, and the cultural products and services produced by all the programme promoters (whether they are public sector bodies, project promoters that have received part-financing, service providers bought through public procurement, etc.).

It is recommended that, when the programmes for public holidays, commemorative days and commemorative years are drawn up and approved, they should be accompanied by the necessary funds for their implementation.

Greater dissemination of approved programmes to mark public holidays, commemorative days and years is important.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION



In terms of people's attitudes towards public holidays, the Day of the Restoration of the State of Lithuania (16 February) is more important than the other public holidays – the Day of the Restoration of the Independence of Lithuania (11 March) and the Day of the Statehood of the Republic of Lithuania (6 July)



Lithuanian diaspora considers events celebrating Lithuanian holidays to be an important tool for preserving Lithuanian identity



The growth of international initiatives and the involvement of people in commemorations of Lithuania's national holidays or days of remembrance not only contributes to the fight against disinformation and enhances the country's security, but also strengthens Lithuania's international visibility



Identification with 'being European' is reinforced by the celebration of commemorative days (e.g. Europe Day) related to this issue

EVALUATION STUDY ON HISTORICAL MEMORY INITIATIVES

THE FEELINGS THAT COME FROM TAKING PART IN THE EVENTS



Patriotism, pride in your country and citizens



Sense of unity, togetherness



A sense of responsibility, a desire to preserve freedom and to contribute to the well-being of the country



A festive, cheerful mood

THE MOST POPULAR WAYS OF COMMEMORATING



Attending concerts



Visiting theatres, museums, exhibitions, cinemas



Getting involved through school events



Participating in global initiatives and campaigns

THE MAIN REASONS WHY COMMEMORATING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, DAYS AND YEARS ARE IMPORTANT

1

Fostering national identity and citizenship

2

Duty, respect and responsibility to your country

3

Consolidation of the population

4

Reminder of painful events and preservation of memory



The negative assessment of the conformity of the celebrations with expectations often depends on **the political views of the visitors, on the assessment of the state or municipal authorities, and sometimes on the organisation, which is organising the celebrations themselves or on a lack of information.**

To improve the content of commemorations of historically important events, it is important to:

- maintain a balance between traditional commemorative practices and new and attractive initiatives,
- involve local communities and NGOs as much as possible in the design and implementation of the programme,
- continue the initiative to encourage communities themselves to organise their celebrations differently,
- strengthening the role of "initiatives from below".

FOREIGN PRACTICES

Based on the good practices in other countries, it can be argued that:

- The bottom-up approach of organising the celebrations is more likely to involve communities of residents in their own celebrations and to encourage co-creation among residents;
- Systematic surveys to determine the significance of commemorative days and public holidays for the population allow us to record and assess the current situation and ongoing developments;
- It is useful to encourage individual initiatives that everyone can contribute to during the public holidays;
- In addition to official, institutional events, many countries have traditions of commemoration led by communities or non-governmental organisations;
- A well-proven approach to organising commemorative events is to combine a variety of sources and methods, e.g. commemorative events should be accompanied by a well-chosen presentation of the theme in the media, as well as by both scholarly and broadly accessible perpetuation of the theme (conferences, exhibitions, film nights, discussion forums, web presentations).

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Reducing the dominance of the discourse of sadness and concentration and introducing more festive elements.

It has been noted that there is a lack of historically significant holidays or commemorative days in Lithuania, which are marked by fun or festivals. It is therefore recommended to initiate a public debate on which (or what) historically important dates in Lithuania could become more oriented towards joyful celebrations. It should be noted that in order to achieve such a change, the need for a proper conceptual justification would become crucial.

Conduct ongoing research on public opinion on commemorations of historically significant events.

It is recommended to include questions related to the evaluation of the commemoration of specific historical events in the survey "Participation of the population in culture and satisfaction with cultural services", which is carried out on a regular basis (every 3 years). It is important not only to survey the opinion of the population, but also to provide a "feedback" system.

Extend the organisation of major commemorative events to the regions.

It is recommended to support other initiatives involving various Lithuanian cities, towns and villages in order to reduce regional exclusion.

Focus on content rather than on the number of events.

Based on the expectations expressed by residents, there is a case for more high-quality exhibitions, educational events, concerts, etc.

Ensure international dissemination of information on initiatives in Lithuania.

More attention to promoting historical memory abroad.

Diaspora representatives highlighted that not only should existing initiatives be preserved, but also that new initiatives should be considered. They also expressed the wish that events should be organised not only in country's capitals but also in other cities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INITIATIVES TO COMMEMORATE THE HOLOCAUST AND THE SOVIET OCCUPATION

Initiatives to commemorate the victims of the German (Nazi) occupation should, in addition to commemorating the Holocaust, also include the genocide of the Romani to a greater extent.

There are relatively few commemorations for Romani, and they have only recently started.

To raise awareness of Jewish and Romani culture and traditions, thus bringing different groups closer together.

Draw on the experience of Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands and Poland, where Holocaust commemorations are coordinated not only by state institutions, but also by local Holocaust remembrance organisations, historical memory institutes and Jewish communities.

Initiatives to commemorate the Soviet occupation strike a balance between remembering the painful events and mourning those who were exiled or died for freedom, as well as sending positive messages.

Positive messages could focus on the pride of a society in its unity, the freedom it has won, and its ability to survive the difficult phases of history and re-establish itself as a prosperous country.

Initiatives to commemorate the Soviet occupation should be given more attention.

From the point of view of the population, Defenders of Freedom day, Genocide Day of Lithuania Minor and the Movement day are of particular importance.