



LO TISHKACH
FOUNDATION
EUROPEAN JEWISH
CEMETERIES INITIATIVE



Working towards the effective and lasting protection and preservation of Jewish cemeteries and mass graves throughout Europe



The Lo Tishkach European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative was established in 2006 as a joint project of the Conference of European Rabbis and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. It aims to guarantee the effective and lasting preservation and protection of Jewish cemeteries and mass graves throughout the European continent.

Identified by the Hebrew phrase 'Lo Tishkach' (*do not forget*), this initiative is establishing a comprehensive publicly-accessible database of all Jewish burial grounds in Europe.

The Lo Tishkach project is also producing a compendium of the different national and international laws and practices affecting these sites, to be used as a starting point to advocate for the better protection and preservation of Europe's Jewish heritage.

A key aim of the project is to engage young Europeans, bringing Europe's history alive, encouraging reflection on the values that are important for responsible citizenship and mutual respect, giving a valuable insight into Jewish culture and mobilising young people to care for our common heritage.

Preserving Jewish Heritage

Jewish tradition regards burial grounds as sacred sites which must never be disturbed. Jewish cemeteries and mass graves also provide a vivid focal point marking the destruction of Jewish communities and for learning the lessons of the Holocaust. They stand as testimony to the constancy of Jewish community life across the European continent and are an important part of Europe's diverse cultural heritage.



Opportunities are increasing for the preservation and protection of Jewish burial grounds in Europe. At the same time, however, thousands of these sites lie unvisited and unprotected, facing new threats to their already parlous existence. Neglect, development, vandalism, theft and well-meaning but inexperienced attempts at restoration are threatening to permanently erase what is often the only surviving physical reminder of Europe's pre-war Jewish communities.

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COUNTRY FOCUS | POLAND



Hundreds of Jewish cemeteries in Poland were destroyed by the Nazis, while many others were subject to decades of post-war neglect.

A 2008 Lo Tishkach survey of 126 Jewish burial grounds in the Masovian Region of Poland found that over 50% are physically unidentified and almost 80% are undelineated.

Almost 50% are now used for commercial, industrial, residential or recreational purposes.

Online Database



Many European Jewish cemeteries and Holocaust sites remain unidentified and are highly vulnerable to damage or destruction.

A core aim of the Lo Tishkach Foundation is to establish a comprehensive, publicly-accessible database of Jewish burial grounds in Europe. Created with the help of student volunteers, the database will be an indispensable source for the history of Jewish communities in Europe and inform actions to protect and preserve these important Jewish heritage sites.

The Lo Tishkach Database of European Jewish Burial Grounds now contains over 9,700 individual cemetery and mass grave records in 36 countries.

Research into Legislation & Practice

Lasting protection for Jewish burial grounds in Europe requires not only appropriate legislation but also effective enforcement.

To drive advocacy efforts, the Lo Tishkach Foundation is leading a research project aiming to collate all legislation and practice affecting Jewish burial grounds throughout Europe, leading to the production of country-by-country reports.

To date, national reports have been produced on **Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Lithuania, Germany, Hungary, Ukraine and Latvia**, in addition to annual comparative reports. In order to facilitate research and advocacy activities, all legislation collected during this project is available from the Lo Tishkach website.

Engaging Youth, Mobilising Volunteers, Respecting the Memory

Collective memories of the past shape the future. We have a duty to meaningfully transmit to younger generations the lessons of the Holocaust and emphasise the values that are needed for responsible citizenship.

Jewish heritage sites provide an opportunity for the mobilisation of young people to care for our common heritage, offer a valuable insight into Jewish culture and are a poignant reminder of the Jewish communities that inhabited thousands of European towns and villages before the Shoah.

Groups of local young people trained by Lo Tishkach are visiting hundreds of Jewish burial sites in Poland, Ukraine and the Czech Republic, gathering vital information on Jewish life in each area and submitting detailed condition reports that will be used as the basis for actions to preserve these valuable sites.

Participants, who are drawn from local Jewish and non-Jewish youth and student groups, also carry out background research on the area's Jewish life, history and culture, including learning about the fate of local Jewish communities during the Holocaust and discussions of the lessons for modern society.

The project aims to practically engage young people with their countries' Jewish culture and history, encourage reflection on the values that are important for responsible citizenship and develop volunteerism and civic responsibility. Lo Tishkach's FSU educational work is supported by the Genesis Philanthropy Group.



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