

# Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/about-the-institute/international-cooperat/7775,International-cooperation.html>

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## International cooperation

The Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) acting under Article 53 point 4 of the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance “promotes in the country and abroad the results of its work and research of other institutions, organisations and people concerning the issues being the subject of its activity.

The IPN has been implementing international projects for many years. This is activity in the **archival, educational, historical, popularizing** and **social media** fields. In addition, the IPN deals with the **search, identification** and **commemorating the victims of totalitarian regimes**, as well as **investigating German and communist crimes**. These activities result in numerous conferences, workshops, and official visits, during which representatives of the Institute establish multilateral relations (often formalized by bilateral and multilateral agreements) and engage in long-term projects. Some of them go beyond the European continent and reach various corners of the world.

## Platform of European Memory and Conscience

The IPN has been one of the founding members of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience. It was established on 14 October

2011 in Prague by 20 organisations. Today, it gathers 63 institutions from the EU, other European countries, Canada and the United States, which are active in historical research, documentation and spreading knowledge about the totalitarian regimes that befell the European continent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main goal of the Platform is to increase public awareness about the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes, thus initiating discussion about universal values, promoting human dignity and human rights.

The IPN is conducting ongoing cooperation in various fields, e.g. contributing a great deal to **joint exhibitions** prepared by Platform members, sharing its expertise and results of historical research as well as granting access to its archival resources. Such projects include “The European Gulag” and “Martyrs of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”, which were designed both as a traveling exhibitions and a virtual tour. It presents the profiles of the martyrs of two totalitarianisms - Nazi and communist.

The IPN has also published in Polish the Platform’s **reader** for secondary school students “Lest We Forget. Memory of Totalitarianism in Europe” Moreover, it has participated in the design and promoting of the Platform’s **educational board game** “Across the Iron Curtain”.

Each year the IPN is active in nominating and voting for candidates for Platform’s annual Prize in recognition of those acting against totalitarian regimes and in defence of human rights.

The IPN’s experts also took part in the drafting of the Platform’s official

review of the permanent exhibition in the House of European History in Brussels.

The IPN has significantly contributed to one of the Platform's projects which is **Justice 2.0.** aimed at establishing an international, pan-European tribunal for the communist crimes. As part of this project, by notification of the Platform, the IPN's Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, Cracow Branch is conducting an investigation into the killings of Polish citizens who in the years 1949–1989, during their planned escape from Poland to Western Europe, attempted to cross the Czechoslovak-Austrian and Czechoslovak-German border. The Commission managed to determine personal data of 31 Poles who lost their lives while trying to escape. The places where their ashes were buried were also determined. Nowadays, the investigation has entered the phase of examining the possibility of prosecuting those who are liable for the death of Polish citizens.

## **European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of the Secret Police Files**

The IPN was one of the founding members of the European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of the Secret Police Files which was established in December 2008 on the initiative of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Party also known as the Gauck Institute. The network consists of eight archival institutions from Central and Eastern Europe. It was established to use the available archives of

secret police agencies toward coming to terms with the former communist dictatorship in the countries of the former Eastern bloc.

The IPN's archival division annually takes part in the Network's meeting, during which current activities of each member and joint projects are discussed. One of the concerns is the IT legacy generated and shaped by the security police in particular countries as well as the possibilities of the use of these types of databases in scientific projects, vetting or the prosecution of communist crimes. The effect of the long-term ongoing cooperation between particular members of the network was the designing of a website displaying documents of multilateral meetings of the security services. It was presented for the first time during the Polish presidency over the network by the IPN's scholars: <https://sovietblocksecurity.eu>

The exhibition entitled "By Any Means", portraying the impact and scope of the activities of the security services in the countries of the Eastern bloc on people's daily lives and the degree of control over the citizens these services exercised, was also presented during Polish presidency. The exhibition covers the period between 1944-1989 and touches upon European countries of the Eastern Bloc, with the exception of the Soviet Union.

### **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)**

Since 1999 the IPN has been a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in operation since 1998. The IHRA's goal is to mobilize and coordinate support from political and social leaders for

education, memory preservation and research on the Holocaust at the national and international levels. It brings together 31 member states and 11 states observers.

As part of its activity in the organization the IPN maintains ongoing working contacts with the IHRA's permanent office, and offers its contribution to the IHRA's reports and documents resulting in the IHRA's practical policy recommendations. It also takes part in the IHRA's annual plenary sessions. For example, within the IHRA's ongoing activities the IPN, together with the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, prepared the Report for 2015-2019 in the area of the commemorating the victims of the Holocaust, debates on the attitudes of Poles towards the extermination of Jews during World War II and the German occupation of Poland, organization of conferences on remembrance, education in the field of Polish-Jewish relations and research on the Holocaust and the extermination of the Roma during World War II.

### **Conference of Polish Museums, Archives and Libraries in the West (MAB)**

The Institute of National Remembrance has been supporting the Conference of Polish Museums Archives and Libraries in the West, including co-organisation of subsequent, annual sessions.

The Conference launched in 1979 at the Polish Museum in Rapperswil is a loose association of Polish organizations, initially of Western Europe, and later also from the USA, Canada and South America. These

are mainly institutions which have libraries, archives or museums of the Polish community abroad. The Conference is an important forum for exchanging experiences of the representatives of emigration institutions from around the world.

The conference brings together the most important cultural institutions of the Polish community abroad, including the Polish Library in Paris, the Polish Museum in Rapperswil, and similar establishments in London, Rome, Montreal and Buenos Aires. In the USA, it gathers associations such as the Polish Army Veterans' Association in America (SWAP), the Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America, the Kościuszko Foundation, the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America, Archives, Library and Polish Museums in Orchard Lake and the Polish Museum in America based in Chicago. The aim of the conference is to strengthen cooperation between member institutions, exchange experiences, assist in collecting *Polonica*, conducting a joint information campaign and sharing the work of member institutions.

For many years, the annual meetings of representatives of museums, libraries and archives in the West have documented the work of emigration institutions. The goal of these meetings is also to discuss problems and to search for solutions together, as well as initiate projects connected with the maintaining of Polish national heritage abroad.

### **Polish-American cooperation**

### **US Holocaust Memorial Museum**

On 15 December 2009, the IPN concluded a Cooperation Agreement with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), which is the United States' official memorial to the Holocaust. During the USHM representatives visit on 26-27 June 2019 in Warsaw, the final formula of Annex No. 2 (to the Agreement of 2009) was developed. It was eventually signed in August 2019. The main subject of the said document is the exchange of archival documents.

As part of the implementation of the agreement, in 2019 the Institute obtained from USHMM 34,674 scans of documents from 7 archival units, including digital copies of documents from the collection of Dr. Juliusz Kühn, a Polish diplomat employed at the Bern Embassy and associated with the so-called Bernese group (the Ładoś group).

### **Defense POW / MIA Accounting Agency**

The IPN's Office of Search and Identification permanently cooperates with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), which is an agency within the United States Department of Defense whose mission is to recover United States military personnel who are listed as prisoners of war (POW), or missing in action (MIA) from designated past conflicts, from countries around the world. The scope of the cooperation is the search for the remains of American soldiers in Poland. Under the signed Memorandum of Understanding, the Office of Search and Identification of the Institute of National Remembrance has been providing substantive support in the field of archival inquiries and conducting local inspections in places related to the statutory activities of DPAA.

## **Federal Bureau of Investigation**

The IPN's Office of Search and Identification has started cooperation with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in the use of the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), which is used, among others, to collect and automatically compare DNA profiles in order to determine the relationship. The cooperation also includes updates, training, and technical support. The system is used in the works related to search and identification of the victims of totalitarian regimes.

## **Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation**

In 2020 the IPN hosted received representatives of the Washington Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. The American delegation came to Poland looking for organizations ready to help it carry out its flagship project, i.e. creating the Victims of Communism Memorial Museum in the heart of the American capital. The role of the IPN as an expert institution would consist primarily of supporting the creation of the museum exhibitions, also by providing copies of some of the resources from the IPN Archive (both written and audiovisual sources), assistance in the organization of workshops and conferences, and supplying educational aids.

## **Polish -Ukrainian cooperation**

### **State Regional Archives - in Odessa, Vinnytsia and Khmelnytskyi**

On 26 March 2018, the Institute of National Remembrance concluded

an agreement with the State Regional Archives - in Odessa, Vinnytsia and Khmelnytskyi in Ukraine. The agreements provided the IPN's archivists access to thousands of documents regarding the NKVD crimes committed on Poles in 1937-38 in the Soviet Union. The materials in question are being digitized and will gradually become part of the Institute's resources. As a result of the cooperation with the individual archives, the IPN is able to show not only to historians, journalists, scientists, but above all the families of the victims, what happened to their relatives at that time.

As part of the cooperation with the archives in Khmelnytskyi, as many as over three and a half thousand archival units (3609 units) have been acquired so far. This translates into 405,372 digital files in tiff format. Copies of 171 volumes of files were provided by the Archives of the Odessa Oblast, which constitutes 20,786 digital files. 46,458 copies of documents from 406 units have been obtained from the Archives in Vinnitsa.

The "Order No. 00485. Anti-Polish Operation of the NKVD in Soviet Ukraine 1937-1938" exhibition was prepared by the Institute of National Remembrance basing on the above mentioned archival materials and photographs from the State Regional Archives - in Odessa, Vinnytsia and Khmelnytskyias well as documents obtained from the Memorial Society and the Center for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding. The exhibition has received the Patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland regaining its independence.

The exhibition consists of 16 boards presenting the fate of people persecuted as part of the "Polish operation" carried out by the NKVD in the Soviet Union in 1937-1938, during which over 143,000 people were arrested, at least 111,000 of whom were sentenced to death. Nearly 30,000 Poles were sent to labor camps. In Ukraine alone, where the largest concentration of the Polish population in the USSR was located, 55 928 people were tried, of whom 47,327 were murdered. The men arrested as part of the operation were accused of belonging to the Polish Military Organization, disbanded in 1921, and which allegedly carried out espionage and subversive activities for the benefit of the Second Polish Republic. Most of them were sentenced to death. The wives of "spies" or "enemies of the people" were sent for 5 to 10 years to Kazakhstan for not informing the authorities about "the counter-revolutionary espionage activities" of their husbands. Their children were often placed in orphanages or imprisoned in labor camps.

The first five boards show the situation of Poles after the Treaty of Riga and the course of the "Polish operation" in the USSR. The following ones portray the personal stories of the repressed. Additionally, 3 boards present photographs of the reenactment of arrests, interrogations and shootings. In Ukraine the exhibition has so far been on display in:

·Khmelnyskyi-23 November 2018

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·Vinnytsia-12 April 2019

· Odessa-9 September 2019

·Kiev-20 November 2019

Apart from being shown in Poland, the exhibition also reached the U.S. The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance and the Pamięć US Association opened the "Order No. 00485. Anti-Polish Operation of the NKVD in Soviet Ukraine 1937-1938" exhibition as part of the 8th edition of the IPN's History Point in New York. On 17 November 2019 it was presented in the church. St. Stanisław Bishop and Martyr in Manhattan, New York and was viewed at the Polish Cultural Foundation in Clark on 20 November 2019. The official opening was accompanied by lectures. Workshops for teachers of Polish students abroad dedicated to the so-called NKVD anti-Polish operation took place at the Polish Cultural Foundation in Clark.

### **Polish Ukrainian working group**

One of the forms of cooperation with Ukraine is the functioning of the Polish-Ukrainian working group aimed at expanding knowledge about the tragic fate of Poles in the years 1939–1956, in the former USSR. The ongoing works focus primarily on the jointly published series "Poland and Ukraine in the 1930s and 1940s. Documents from the Archives of the Secret Services".

### **Polish Ukrainian Partnership Forum**

The President of the Institute of National Remembrance is a member of the established on 23 January 2017, by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main objectives of the Partnership Forum are to discuss the sensitive issues of Polish - Ukrainian relations emphasizing the importance of scientific discussion of current problems and the necessity of finding common solutions.

### **Europe-Ukraine Forum**

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The IPN's representatives also attend the annual meetings of the **Europe-Ukraine Forum**– one of the most important conferences dedicated to Ukraine. The intention of its organizers –the Center for East European Studies –was to create a platform for civil dialogue and cooperation between Poles and Ukrainians. The forum is also a consultative and advisory body. It is a meeting place for representatives of politics, business, local governments, international organizations and analytical centers from many countries.

### **Polish-Lithuanian cooperation**

#### **Institute of the Lithuanian History**

Under the agreement signed in 2017 between the Institute of National Remembrance and the Institute of Lithuanian History, cooperation was initiated, which focuses primarily on organizing conferences and publishing historical publications. A post-conference volume *Bez emocji. Polsko-litewski dialog o Józefie Piłsudskim*, ed. D. Jastrzębska-Golonkova, A. Nikzentaitis, W. Suleja, T. Wolsza, Warszawa 2020 [Without Emotions. The Polish-Lithuanian Dialogue on Józef Piłsudski] has been published in Polish. The above-mentioned publication is also to be published in Lithuanian. In 2019, both institutions began works on publishing documents pertaining to Polish-Lithuanian relations in the years 1918-1945.

#### **The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania**

The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania is a state-funded research institute dedicated to "the study of genocide,

crimes against humanity, and war crimes in Lithuania; the study of the persecution of local residents by occupying regimes; the study of armed and unarmed resistance to occupying regimes; the initiation of the legal evaluation of the activities of the organisers and implementers of genocide; and the commemoration of freedom fighters and genocide victims." The centre was founded on 25 October 1992 by the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian Republic as the "State Genocide Research Centre of Lithuania"

In March 2020, the Institute of National Remembrance employees visited Vilnius as part of the Polish-Lithuanian working group. The meeting focused mainly on the publication *Rozpracowanie podziemia litewskiego przez IX grupę operacyjną MGB na terenie Polski..* Its aim was to organize the work undertaken so far (final arrangement of documents) and to establish the division of labor in the common parts of the future publication. The group also met with the Director General of the Center T. B. Burauskaitė and with the director of the Lithuanian Special Records Archive, O. Léveryys

## **Polish-German cooperation**

### **Arolsen Archives - International Center on Nazi Persecution**

The Institute of National Remembrance cooperates with the Arolsen Archives, whose goal is to reconstruct fates and search for missing people. Its electronic databases are an extremely valuable addition to the IPN's own archival resource, especially in the operations of , the Center of Information on the Victims of World War II, established at the

beginning of 2014, by the decision of the President of the IPN. Its main task is to help families who are looking for information about the fate of their relatives repressed by the Third Reich and the Soviet Union in 1939-1956. The functioning of the Center is related to the simplification of the rules for providing information and sharing documents - a query about the fate of a family member can be sent by e-mail, traditional mail, and via the contact form on this website. Apart from providing information on the victims of World War II, an important element of the Center activity is the collection of source documentation. Currently, it is done in cooperation with the team responsible for the "Archive Full of Remembrance" project.

On 2-4 February, 2020, in Bad Arolsen, a working meeting of the AIPN delegation with the deputy director of the Arolsen Archives, Giora Zwilling, on cooperation between institutions was held. During the meeting, the same queries conducted by the Institute of National Remembrance and the Arolsen Archives for inquiries from Poland were discussed, as well as the plan to initiate tripartite archival cooperation between the Institute of National Remembrance, Arolsen Archives and the State Regional Archives in Vinnitsya, Ukraine.

### **Memorials in former German concentration camps**

The IPN conducts cooperation with German memorials – former concentration camps. This includes exchanging documents, spreading knowledge about history, commemoration of the victims as well as search and identification. As regards, recent examples of cooperation in 2020, the Institute of National Remembrance cooperated with the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation

in organizing the funeral of Polish female prisoners of KL Ravensbrück executed in 1942, in the cemetery in Fürstenberg/Havel. The ashes had been discovered by the IPN's Office of Search and Identification. The date of the planned ceremony was eventually postponed due to the pandemic. In 2020, the Institute of National Remembrance also commemorated General Bolesław Roja at the site of the former KL Sachsenhausen German concentration camp (now: KL Sachsenhausen Museum) on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the camp's liberation. General Roja was one of the four signatories of the order to establish the independent Polish Army of the Second Polish Republic. Arrested and transported to the camp, he was murdered there in May 1940.

## **History Points of the IPN abroad**

History points abroad are more than just a meeting place. These are points on the world map where Poles can meet and feel their common history, values and bond with their homeland.

At the foreign History Points, during workshops, lectures, classes and meetings, the IPN's educators, scientists and archivists present the latest findings and the most important activities of the Institute of National Remembrance. Through modern teaching methods and attractive educational materials, educators conduct classes for children in Polish institutions and provide training for their teachers. The IPN's historians present their research achievements during meetings and lectures. Thanks to contacts with the Polish diaspora and local communities, it is possible to obtain invaluable personal effects of Polish emigrants within the IPN's "Archive Full of Remembrance" project.

Currently, active history points operate in: Vilnius (Lithuania), Daugavpils (Latvia), Grodno (Belarus), Zhytomyr and Lviv (Ukraine),

Zaolzie (the Czech Republic), Brussels (Belgium), London (Great Britain), Chicago and New York (the United States).

### **Newsletter in English**

The IPN's newsletter is sent to about 1,000 recipients specializing in historical topics, including diplomata, journalists, foreign correspondents, non-governmental organizations and international platforms, Polish institutions, and teachers. It deals with current topics, as well as important anniversaries or events in the recent history of Poland, popularizing educational materials, exhibitions and publications by the IPN. In 2020, a lot of space was devoted to the Polish Righteous, for instance in relation to the premiere of the film "Polmission" about the Ładoś Group. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Warsaw, the historic victory over the Bolsheviks was also brought up. The awards granted by the Institute of National Remembrance, Semper Fidelis and Witness of History were also popularized, along with the profiles of the winners. References were made to defamation or distortions emerging in the public space, e.g. as part of the launch of the publication of the Institute of National Remembrance, a continuation of Tomasz Domański's book *Correcting the Picture*, a block of articles about Soviet prisoners and materials about the Katyń massacre. As part of the summary of the IPN's activities in 2020, the Christmas newsletter presents permanent thematic blocks prepared for the needs of the English-language website, concerning e.g. Polish Righteous, the Holocaust in occupied Poland, Solidarity, the Katyń Massacre or the project "We Tell Poland to

the World". In the future, distribution is planned by the International Council of Archives (ICA), a non-governmental organization associating 1,400 institutions from 190 countries around the world.

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