

## MAXIMILIAN-KOLBE-STIFTUNG e.V.

Postal address:

Kaiserstrasse 161,

53113 Bonn

Germany

Tel.: ++49/ 228/ 103 350

Email: [info@maximilian-kolbe-stiftung.de](mailto:info@maximilian-kolbe-stiftung.de)



### Invitation

Bonn, March 2026

The Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation invites you to participate in the 17. European Workshop on the topic

#### **“Dealing with the past of Auschwitz burdened by violence”**

from Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> till Sunday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026 in “Krakowka Fundacja Centrum Dialogu I Modlitwy w Oswiecimiu (Center for Dialogue and Prayer in Oswiecim/ Poland).

We invite you to enter a joint process of learning on dealing with experience of violence and its consequences in the exemplary analysis of the present significance of Auschwitz.

Analyzing Auschwitz and its consequences – beyond the concrete case – gets an exemplary meaning for dealing with violence experience and its aftereffects in general. Auschwitz stands for experiences having a lasting effect on the identity of our civilization. Europe has been marked and hurt by the experience of violence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Auschwitz and the connections of experience symbolized by Auschwitz are playing an important role in this context. This is also shown in different forms, contents, functions and ways Auschwitz is remembered by different European societies. These differences which are based on varying historical experience and experience contexts, make Auschwitz leave a lasting impression. Those who deal with the remembrance of Auschwitz should aim at reconciliation and they have to confront these differences and have to contribute to a deeper understanding of the experiences made.

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. It is essential to make

these differences visible and to make them comprehensible to one another and to oneself so that the negative consequences of history of violence might be overcome. Therefore the workshop will provide opportunity to visit the former concentration camp, to meet survivors and to reflect on the question of particular interest to the participants.

The project is meant to encourage the participants themselves to analyze history in a constructive way. In addition to the joint learning efforts of the participants, the project aims at giving a concrete testimony of the Church's efforts to achieve a treatment of the history of violence aiming at reconciliation, at solidarity with the survivors, at respect for the sufferings of the victims and which is marked by an understanding and responsibility for the tense aftereffects of this history. The workshop will not only have a political dimension but also a spiritual one.

Finally, the workshop is meant to give an impulse for the work of the participants in their individual contexts. The joint reflection on the role of the church when dealing with a past burdened by violence is an indispensable component of our path. Therefore we will also celebrate the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Maximilian Kolbe in a decent way.

You will be in this workshop our guest. Your costs for accommodation as well your travel expenses will be covered by the Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation. The working language of the workshop will be English.

Please respond before **May 01<sup>st</sup>, 2026**. Please send an E-Mail and a short version of your CV to [info@maximilian-kolbe-stiftung.de](mailto:info@maximilian-kolbe-stiftung.de).

Sincere regards,



Dr. Jörg Lür  
Vice-President Maximilian-Kolbe-Stiftung



Paulis Apinis  
Managing Director Maximilian-Kolbe-Stiftung

## 17. European Workshop

### **On dealing with the past of Auschwitz burdened by violence.**

*Invitation to broaden perspectives.*

*2026 August 11 – 16,  
Centre for Dialogue and Prayer  
Oswiecim, Poland*



Since 2010 the Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation organizes an annual workshop on dealing with the past of Auschwitz burdened by violence. Within the framework of the workshop 30 representatives of different European societies are invited to enter a joint process of learning on dealing with the experience of violence and its consequences in the exemplary analysis of the present significance of Auschwitz.

Analysing 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 civilization. Europe has been marked and hurt by the experience of violence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Auschwitz and the connected experiences symbolized by Auschwitz are playing an important role in this context. This is shown in the different forms, contents, functions and ways Auschwitz is remembered by different European societies. These differences which are based on varying historical experience and contexts have great impact on the relationships within societies as well as between nations.

The workshop intends 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. It is essential to make these differences visible and to make them comprehensible to one another and to oneself so that the negative impact of the history of violence might be overcome. The workshop intends to give an impulse for the work of the participants in their individual contexts.

In addition to the joint learning efforts of the participants, the project aims at giving a concrete testimony of the Church's efforts to achieve a treatment of the history of

violence aiming at reconciliation, at solidarity with the survivors, at respect for the sufferings of the victims which is marked by an understanding and the responsibility for the tense after-effects of this history. The joint and self-critical reflection on the role of the Church when dealing with a past burdened by violence is an indispensable component of our work.

## Program

### **Tuesday, 11 August**

#### **THE GROUP**

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	Arrival until 03:00 p.m.
04:00 p.m.	Introduction into the aims and the programme of the Workshop - <b>Dr Jörg Lüer</b> <i>Vice-president Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation, Germany</i> - <b>Marta Titaniec</b> <i>Polish Council for Jewish-Christian-Relations, Poland</i>
	Detailed introduction of the participants
06:00 p.m.	Dinner
07:00 p.m.	"Dealing with violent burdened past as a challenge". - <b>Andrzej Kacorzyk (tbc)</b> <i>Vice-Director of the Auschwitz Museum, Poland</i>

### **Wednesday, 12 August**

#### **THE CAMP**

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07:00 a.m.	Eucharistic Mass
07:30 a.m.	Breakfast
08:20 a.m.	Walk to the Basic camp
09:00 a.m.	Guided tour through the Basic camp of Auschwitz
12:45 p.m.	Lunch
01:45 p.m.	Departure by bus
02:00 p.m.	Guided tour through Auschwitz – Birkenau
06:00 p.m.	Supper
07:00 p.m.	Exchange in small groups and plenary session

### **Thursday, 13 August**

#### **THE SURVIVORS**

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07:30 a.m.	Eucharistic Mass
08:00 a.m.	Breakfast
	Meeting the survivors

09:30 a.m.	- <b>Zdzisława Włodarczyk (tbc)</b>
10.30 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:50 a.m.	- <b>Grzegorz Tomaszewski (tbc)</b>
12:30 a.m.	Meeting in Plenary
01:00 p.m.	Lunch
02:15 p.m.	Departure by bus
02:30 p.m.	Visit of Marian Kolodziej exhibition in Harmeze - <b>Rev Dr Manfred Deselaers</b> <i>Centre for Dialogue and Prayer, Poland</i>
04:30 p.m.	Coffee break
05:00 p.m.	Meeting in Plenary
06:00 p.m.	Supper
07:00 p.m.	<b>"Reflections on the role of the church in dealing with a violent past and reconciliation".</b>  - <b>N.N.</b>  Discussion

### **Friday, 14 August**

### **DEALING WITH HISTORY AS A CHALLENGE**

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08:00 a.m.	Breakfast
09:45 a.m.	Walk to the Basic camp
10:30 a.m.	Celebration of Eucharistic Mass on the occasion of the 84 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of P. Kolbe's death
01:00 p.m.	Lunch
02:00 p.m.	Transfer by bus  <b>"Where am I".</b> Extended guided tour to Oswiecim (Old Marketplace, Jewish Centre, Maximilian Kolbe church, Living in Oswiecim after WWII) - <b>Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz (tbc)</b> <i>Researcher at the Museum Auschwitz, Poland</i>
06:00 p.m.	Supper
07:00 p.m.	<b>Lectures by participants on World War II and Auschwitz as it is remembered in their countries ( I )</b>  - <b>Dr Robert Zurek (tbc)</b> <i>Director, Kreisau Foundation for European Understanding, Poland</i>

- **Dr Jörg Lüer**  
*Vice-President, Maximilian-Kolbe-Stiftung, Germany*

Discussion

## **Saturday, 15 August**

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| 07:30 a.m. | Eucharistic Mass  |
| 08:00 a.m. | Breakfast   |
| 09:00 a.m. | <b>Lectures by participants on World War II and Auschwitz as it is remembered in their countries ( II )</b> |
|            | - <b>N.N.</b>   |
|            | - <b>N.N.</b>   |
|            | Discussion  |
| 10:45 a.m. | Coffee break  |
| 11:00 a.m. | <b>OPEN SPACE 1</b>   |
| 01:00 p.m. | Lunch   |
| 03:00 p.m. | <b>OPEN SPACE 2</b>   |
| 04:30 p.m. | Coffee break  |
| 05:00 p.m. | Plenary session<br>Report from the <b>OPEN SPACE</b> , discussion.  |
| 07:00 p.m. | Dinner – Celebration – Music  |

## **Sunday, 16 August**

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| 07:15 a.m. | Breakfast  |
| 08:00 a.m. | Transfer by bus  |
|            | <b>Spiritual reflection - Way of the Cross</b>                                     |
|            | - <b>Rev Dr Manfred Deselaers</b><br><i>Centre for Dialogue and Prayer, Poland</i> |
| 11:00 a.m. | Feedback and reflection on the workshop  |
| 12:00 p.m. | Lunch  |
|            | End and departures of the participants.  |

Languages at the conference: **English, Polish and German**

Location of the workshop:

Krakowska Fundacja  
Centrum Dialogu i Modlitwy w Oświęcimiu  
1 M. Kolbego St.  
32-602 Oświęcim  
phone: +48 (33) 843 10 00  
phone: +48 (33) 843 08 88  
fax: +48 (33) 843 10 01  
Education Department: [education@cdim.pl](mailto:education@cdim.pl)  
Reception: [reception@cdim.pl](mailto:reception@cdim.pl) Homepage: [www.cdim.pl](http://www.cdim.pl)

This 17. European Workshop on the topic „Dealing with the past of Auschwitz burdened by violence“ is organized by the Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation.

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