

International meeting in Verdun about Jewish Tradition and Culture in Europe

Report of 26 July 2011: Jewish tradition, culture and history in each country

The main topics of the third day of the conference were the different points of view on the Jewish tradition, feasts and culture from people from France, Portugal, Poland and Germany of various ages

In the morning there were discussion workshops on Jewish life, tradition and culture, so the participants had an overview of the basics and it was possible to have an exchange on the same base of knowledge. The group members had conversations on the stages of Jewish life from birth to death and about annual Jewish festivals and ceremonies. The meaning of the important symbols such as Kippa, Mezusah, Hanukka Candles and the Kashrut in the daily life of the Orthodox Jews was also discussed.

Each group presented their conclusions followed by questions and comments from the audience. All in all this happened in a good atmosphere. The discussion went on during the lunch break and was followed by last group's presentation and the start of new workshop groups.

These discussion groups focused on the time after the 2nd World War to the present and the differences between the countries of the participants. There were five international groups having conversations about memorials, archives, cemeteries, synagogues and festivals. Like in the morning, each group presented the conclusions of their discussion.

In the evening the group met two elder people from the Jewish community in Verdun - Mister Blachard and Madame Cahen. Most of the questions were about the situation during the Shoah, which was not anticipated by the participants from France as well as by the two guests. Nevertheless for most of the audience it was interesting and moving to listen to the "living history".

It was the first time the two witnesses talked about their life experience to a group of people they didn't know.

We are very thankful to have had the opportunity to meet people from Verdun, Lisbon, Potsdam and Cracow, have conversations about the life in our countries and learn something about their different backgrounds.