

# STALAG VIII A Memorial Site

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EDUCATIONAL OFFER



MEETINGPOINT MEMORY MESSIAEN  
VEREIN FÜR ERINNERUNG, BILDUNG  
UND KULTUR





EUROPEJSKIE CENTRUM EDUKACYJNO-KULTURALNE  
ŻCZYZELAC - GÖRLITZ  
MEETINGPOINT MUSIC PRESSAM

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# Dear teachers, educators and everyone interested,

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You are holding in your hands the first issue of the educational programme of the Stalag VIII A Memorial.

The Stalag VIII A Memorial sees itself as a place of historical and political education. This booklet will enable you to find out about our programme in detail and to plan your visit to our memorial site with its help.

The educational programme of the Stalag VIII A Memorial was put together for schoolchildren, students, youth groups from Germany and Poland as well as young adults from all over Europe. It can be used in both school and non-school contexts to familiarise young people with the topic of captivity and to give them an insight into the individual fates of the prisoners of war held in Stalag VIII A.

Our Memorial Site works with non-formal educational formats that deepen and complement school education. Each format includes elements of active participation of all learners. The offer consists of methodically coordi-

nated modules. These can be combined in different ways within the formats we offer and range from two- to three-hour tours to half- and full-day workshops to a multi-day programme. All events are accompanied and guided by staff members of the education department. The methods used and topics selected are aimed at young people from the age of 12 and are adapted to the respective needs in consultation with the group leader.

The special location of the memorial in the German-Polish border region determines the orientation of our facilities' work, which is not only open to mononational groups, but also explicitly welcomes bi- and multinational groups. The multilingual and interculturally trained team of the memorial site accompanies the visitors throughout their stay and also offers the service of interpreting in Polish, German and English, if required. We also help you in finding a German or Polish partner group.

This brochure is intended to help you plan a visit to the memorial site. Contact us and we will work with you to design a visit that is adapted to the needs and expectations of all participants.

We look forward to seeing you!





# Stalag VIII A

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The German prisoner of war camp for men enlisted and non-commissioned officers - Stalag VIII A - was part of a system of POW camps organised by the Third Reich before the outbreak of war. It existed between 1939 and 1945.

Construction of the Görlitz main camp began almost simultaneously with Germany's invasion of Poland, i.e. with the start of the war in September 1939. It was built by the first prisoners of war, who were initially housed in a transit camp in the north-east of the city. The first group of prisoners - Polish soldiers - arrived in Görlitz on 7 September 1939. In total, about 120,000 prisoners of war from Poland, France, the Commonwealth Army, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, Italy, the USA and Belgium passed through the camp - some were imprisoned for a few days, others for many months or years. The POWs were used as labourers in practically all sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, mining, transport, local factories and shops.

Living conditions in Stalag VIII A and its subcamps were unacceptable. The Stalag alone - designed for about 10 to 15 thousand prisoners - was inhabited by over 47,000 people in September 1944. Due to constant overcrowding, poor sanitary and hygienic conditions, inadequate nutrition, insufficient access to medical care and the hard physical work, it is estimated that about 12,000 soldiers did not survive their imprisonment in Görlitz. The largest group of victims were Soviet prisoners of war, who were the worst cared for and therefore died by the dozens every day and were buried in a mass grave behind the camp grounds.

At the beginning of February 1945, Stalag VIII A was evacuated to the west in several stages. More prisoners of war fell victim to these so-called death marches. Seriously ill prisoners remained in the camp, guarded by only a few soldiers and a few civilians until liberation on 8 May.

After the war, the site of the camp was located in declared Polish territory. The camp barracks were dismantled and the building materials were destined for the reconstruction of the destroyed cities. The former Stalag was hardly an issue in relations between the People's Republic of Poland and the GDR, which led to a gradual deterioration of the camp structure. Thus, the camp not only disappeared from the scene, but also from cultural memory.





# The Stalag VIII A Memorial Site and the European Centre of Remembrance, Education, Culture

The site of the Polish national memorial of the former German POW camp Stalag VIII A is now home to the European Centre of Remembrance, Education, Culture, which is jointly run by the foundation of the same name and its German partner, the Meetingpoint Memory Messiaen e.V..

The Meetingpoint Memory Messiaen e.V. - Association for Remembrance, Education and Culture took on the mission of bringing the history of the former prisoner-of-war camp Stalag VIII A on both sides of the Neisse River back into public consciousness.

Together with its Polish partner - the Foundation Remembrance, Education, Culture - the Meetingpoint focuses on creating a modern educational site in which the memory of the past becomes an incentive for active action in the present and the future. In doing so, the memorial expressly sees itself as an international educational and meeting place as well as a place for debate and discussion about current German-Polish and world political issues in the European City of Görlitz-Zgorzelec.

Supported by local authorities, institutions and experts on both sides of the Neisse River and based on the political consensus between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland, the partners are working on further research and diverse communication of the history of Stalag VIII A so that the fates of the victims will never be forgotten.

Meetingpoint Memory Messiaen e.V. also functions as the central office of the German-Polish Youth Office (DPJW) and as a coordination office for international children's and youth work in the European City of Görlitz-Zgorzelec. In 2021, the association was honoured as a beacon project of the DPJW for its German-Polish educational and mediation work. In addition, the association is part of a close-knit international partner network of associations, memorial sites and official authorities.





# Educational offer













The educational offer of Stalag VIII A Memorial consists of 12 modules, which are colour-coded according to category.

- GETTING TO KNOW THE MEMORIAL AND IT'S HISTORY
- INTRODUCTION AND TOPIC RELATED BASICS
- DEEPENING THE KNOWLEDGE AND CREATIVE WORK
- REFLECTION AND INDIVIDUAL COMMEMORATION

Each module has a time indication (1h) and a recommendation to help you choose a suitable module combination.

In addition, symbols indicate which media are used, in which languages the module can be booked and the general character of the module.

As part of the educational offer, you will also find 4 special offers that go beyond the site-specific educational work at the memorial.

 Duration	 Languages	 Interactive work/task
 Archaeological sources, artefacts	 Peer-to-peer approach	 Exhibition
 Text and image sources	 Indoors / outdoors	 Reflection
 Introduction	 City game, geocaching	 Commemoration
 Maintenance work	 Film	 Other media, e.g. multimedia presentations

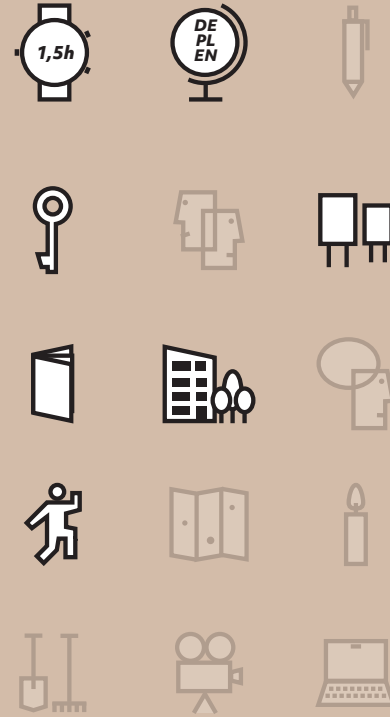




## 1 | GUIDED TOUR

# The memorial talks

————— Recommendation: well suited for the first visit in combination with module 11



During the guided tour, participants will gain an insight into the history of the former prisoner of war camp Stalag VIII A.

During the tour of the site and a visit of the permanent exhibition, basic knowledge is imparted about the history of the site, about the experiences of prisoners of war in Görnitz as well as a the German prisoner of war system during the Second World War and its effects. The participants also learn about the memorial site's work in upholding the victim's memory and their project work.

The guided tour is conducted by staff members of the memorial site using various illustrative materials e.g. photos, drawings, interviews and archaeological findings. Participants have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss what they have learned amongst each other.

The module serves to acquire knowledge as well as to contextualise and deepen already preexisting knowledge of the Second World War and the prisoner of war system.



In case of bad weather, a guided tour of the permanent and temporary exhibitions may take place in the European Centre as an alternative.





## 2 | INTERACTIVE GUIDED TOUR

# Tell us about Stalag VIII A

———— Recommendation: well suited for longer visits to the memorial



In this module, the participants take on the role of experts and work independently on getting to know the history of Stalag VIII A. They are actively involved in the process of learning and passing on acquired knowledge by designing an interactive guided tour. By doing so, they learn from each other.

The module consists of three phases: first, the participants receive a general introduction to the memorial and the working method. This is followed by a workphase with historical sources in small groups. Each group works on a specific topic and prepares a station of the guided tour. Historical sources and secondary sources in the form of various media are used. This is followed by an interactive tour of the Stalag VIII A-site or the permanent exhibition. The participants guide each other through the memorial site and impart the knowledge they have acquired to each other.

During the module, participants learn to work with sources, to develop knowledge independently and to convey it in a way that is appropriate for the target group. The staff support the participants as needed throughout the entire module.



A memorial service can also be integrated into this module (see Module 11).





### 3 | INTRODUCTION TO SOURCE WORK

## What sources can tell us?

———— Recommendation: well suited as an introductory module before modules 2, 6 and 9



The aim of this module is to introduce participants to working with (historical) sources and artefacts. After formulating a definition of the term “source” together, the participants get to know different types of sources in an active way using examples. These are compared with each other with the aim of identifying distinguishing features and understanding the function of each type of source.

Within the module, participants are guided to reflect on existing knowledge or to absorb new knowledge in a structured way. The use of objects stimulates haptic perception, making the concept of source tangible. The participants thereby deepen various competences, especially in the field of source and media work.

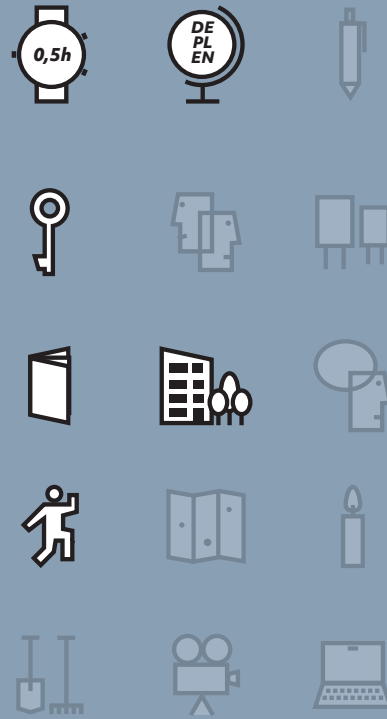




## 4 | TERMS AND MEANINGS

# The National Socialist camp system

Recommendation: well suited as an introductory module before module 1, 2, 9, 10



This module serves to clarify basic terms related to the history of Stalag VIII A and World War II.

Using various media and objects as examples, the participants actively try to determine whether they are looking at the testimony of a POW camp or a concentration camp. They learn about the characteristics of German POW camps during World War II and how this type of camp differed from the more frequently discussed and usually better known German concentration camps.

In this module, participants process existing and new knowledge in a structured manner and thus develop the basis for a better understanding of the history of Stalag VIII A.



The module fits well for groups with little or no prior knowledge in this topic.



## 5 | KNOWLEDGE PREPARATION

### My picture of ...

Recommendation: well suited as an introductory module before module 1 or as an in-depth module for a second visit



In this module, the participants examine their own knowledge. They examine a selected topic (e.g. National Socialism or World War II), which information, associations and memories they associate with the topic and where these mental images come from.

In the first phase, the participants work individually. With the help of visual aids, they create a knowledge collage that illustrates what knowledge they have and where it comes from (school and education, family, pop culture). In the second phase, the resulting pictures are presented to each other and discussed in pairs. Afterwards, differences and similarities that emerged in the second phase are discussed in plenary.

The module strengthens various competences such as reflective competence, creativity and communication.



**NOTE:** With regard to different cultural and individual backgrounds, this method is particularly interesting for bi- or multinational groups. In the context of stays lasting several days, the module can be used as reflection method.





## 6 | BIOGRAPHY WORK

# The prisoners of war in Stalag VIII A

Recommendation: well suited as an in-depth module after module 1 or in combination with module 7



This module works with biographies of former prisoners of war of Stalag VIII A and has an in-depth character. Working with specific war and survival stories gives the participants the opportunity to connect to the fates of prisoners of war and to confront themselves with different, also emotional aspects of their experiences during and after captivity. The participants deal with various sources, including authentic materials (letters, photos, family reports) from the memorial site's collection.

Depending on the group size and constellation, participants work in small groups or in plenary. The module strengthens methodological competences through critical examination of historical sources.



There are several biographies to choose from in this module. A good example is the biography of the Italian military internee Renato Gargano, who came to Stalag VIII A at the age of 16. More biographies can be found on our website.





## 7 | FILM PROJECTION

# “Mothers and daughters”

Recommendation: well suited as an in-depth module after modules 1 and 2 or in combination with module 6



The history of POW camps is usually associated with the fate of men. The fact that women were also imprisoned in POW camps during World War II often plays only a marginal role. In this module, participants learn about the history of Polish women who were imprisoned in the prisoner of war camp Ehrenhain-Zeithain as a result of their participation in the Warsaw Uprising through a documentary film. The film talks about specific experiences of women, which also include the birth of children. Former prisoners of war and their daughters are featured in this film.

In addition to the film projection the module includes a short introduction and a discussion afterwards.



The original version of the film is in Polish with German subtitles.

## 8 | TIMELINE

# How to present history chronologically

Recommendation: well suited as an in-depth module after module 1



This module deals with one of the basic competences of historical thinking: the (re)construction of a historical narrative. In small groups, the participants are given the task of creating a three-dimensional timeline. For this, they use “cubes” with specific historical events, dates and photos on them. When creating the timeline, the participants try to correctly classify the cubes with local-historical events and put them in the right order with cubes representing events of the “big” history and contextualize their global effects.

After the working phase in small groups, the participants present their respective timelines to each other, check the chronological classification and reflect on the challenges they had to face during the task.

In addition to history-related skills, participants also use their creativity and teamwork skills in this module.



This module requires prior knowledge about World War II.



## An interactive exhibition

Recommendation: well suited as an in-depth module after module 1



The aim of this module is to create an interactive, inclusive museum by young people for young people.

The participants work in small groups on a specific topic related to the history of Stalag VIII A and design an interactive museum station that conveys the collected knowledge in an appealing and inclusive way - for example in the form of quizzes or puzzles. In doing so, they are supported by the educational staff with the help of in-depth questions and ideas.

After the working phase in small groups, the museum is “opened” and all participants have time to look at the jointly designed exhibition. At the same time, the groups take care of welcoming the “visitors” at their station. During the visit, the participants answer questions and collect points at each station.

Creativity, organisational skills and knowledge transfer are used in this module.



The organisational complexity of the module requires active co-supervision on the part of the accompanying persons.



# Working for Peace

Recommendation: well suited in combination with module 1 as introduction and module 11 as conclusion



In this module, the participants carry out light maintenance work on the grounds of the memorial site and contribute to keeping the monuments and the cemetery in a condition worthy of the victims of Stalag VIII A. During manual activities such as sweeping, leaf raking or weeding, the participants have the opportunity to think about what they just have learned (e.g. in the framework of Module 1) and to refelet on it by themselves, as well as discuss it with each other in an informal way.

The module helps to deepen skills such as teamwork and self-organisation and offers the young people the opportunity to explore the memorial site again, individually.



Equipment and work gloves will be provided. Participants should wear weatherproof clothing and sturdy shoes.





## Commemoration

Recommendation: well suited following modules  
1, 2 and 10



In this module, participants are given the opportunity to prepare and experience a moment of commemoration together. The form of the commemoration can be freely designed by the participants and express their approach to commemoration. For example, prepared speeches, singing together, poems or a minute of silence with memorial lights can be part of the commemoration.

Through the joint design and implementation of the commemoration, the participants reflect on what they have learned and experienced during the visit. In this way, the importance of remembering becomes tangible for each individual.

Alternatively, the commemoration can be prepared by a group within the framework of Module 2.



We provide one grave light per group.

## Reflection round

Recommendation: well suited as a final  
module for any module combination



Methodologically adapted to the needs of the group, this module creates a moment for individual and collective reflection. The participants are guided through various methods to process what they have learned and experienced during the visit to the memorial site and to share the results of this reflection with the rest of the group.

During this module, each participant is actively welcomed to take part in the reflection.



Depending on the course of the visit and the needs of the group, this module can be included at several points.

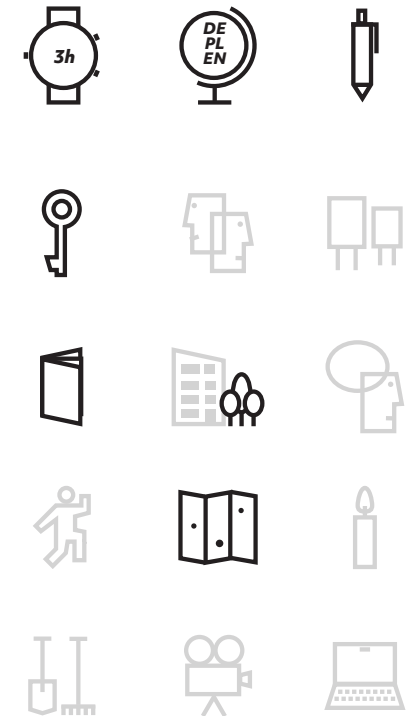




## \*1 | CITY EXPLORATION

# On the historical traces of forced labourers in Görlitz

Recommendation: in-depth module for a second visit or for a multi-day memorial visit



This module sends participants on a search for historical traces left by forced labour in Görlitz. With a map in hand, they explore today's European City of Görlitz/Zgorzelec in groups and independently get to know places that are connected to the history of Stalag VIII A. At each site, a hint awaits to guide them to the next destination.

In this module, competences such as teamwork, self-organisation and orientation skills come into play. Participants also learn to read traces of history in today's urban landscape.



Participants will move in small groups outside the memorial site during this module. The recommended minimum age of the group is 14 years.



# Multi-day study trip

A memorial site visit lasting several days offers the opportunity to get to know the history and the grounds of the former Stalag VIII A, thoroughly. Based on the educational programme of the memorial site, we create a programme that is tailored to the expectations and needs of your group.

Depending on the programme, the study trip can be planned for a maximum of 5 days.

Sample programme – 3 days



DAY  
1

Morning	— Arrival, welcome and information about the house rules
Lunch, followed by room allocation	
Afternoon	— Getting to know each other and introducing the memorial and the programme — Introduction to the topic and getting to know the memorial site (Module 1)
Dinner	
Evening	— Joint end of the day - reflection round — Free evening activities / campfire

DAY  
2

Breakfast	
Morning	— Starting the day together: energiser and language animation — Step two of getting to know the memorial site (Module 3 + Module 6 and 7 OR Module 9)
Lunch	
Afternoon	— Energiser and language animation — Outdoor programme (module 10 + 11/ module *1) or free time
Dinner	
Evening	— Joint end of the day - reflection round — Free evening activities / campfire

DAY  
3

Breakfast and room clearing	
Morning	— Starting the day together: energiser and language animation — Completion of the workshops (Module 8 ) and reflection (Module 12)
Lunch	
Afternoon	— Departure



Sample programme – 5 days



DAY 1

Morning	— Arrival, welcome and information about the house rules
Lunch, followed by room allocation	
Afternoon	— Getting to know and introducing the memorial and the programme — Introduction to the topic an the memorial site and de-aling with history in a creative way (Module 2 – Part 1)
Dinner	
Evening	— Getting together and refelction of the day in plenary — Free evening activities / campfire

DAY 2

Breakfast	
Morning	— Starting the day together: energiser and language animation — Continuation of the work from the previous day with field survey (Module 2 – Part 2)
Lunch	
Afternoon	— Energiser and language animation — Outdoor Programme (Module 10/ Module *1)
Dinner	
Evening	— Getting together and refelction of the day in plenary — Free evening activities / campfire

DAY 3

Breakfast	
Morning + Afternoon	— Excursion (examples under leisure activities) — Lunch (packed lunch)
Dinner	
Evening	— Free evening activities / campfire

DAY 4

Breakfast	
Morning	— Starting the day together: energiser and language animation — Workshops (Module 3 + Module 6 and 7 OR Module 9)
Lunch	
Afternoon	— Energiser and language animation — Outdoor programme (module 10 + 11/ module *1) or free time
Dinner	
Evening	— Getting together and refelction of the day in plenary — Free evening activities / campfire

DAY 5

Breakfast and check out	
Morning	— Starting the day together: energiser and language animation — Completion of the workshops (Module 8 ) and reflection (Module 12)
Lunch	
Afternoon	— Departure



## Worcation

Worcation stands for international, creative youth work at a historic location.

The summer project in the European City of Görlitz/Zgorzelec, brings together 25 young adults aged 16 to 26. This group of young Europeans have two things in common: an interest in European history and the desire to get to know people from other European countries. For two weeks they get to know the memorial site of Stalag VIII A and, above all, each other. In the process, the group develops a personal perspective on the history of the site and deals with it in a creative and tangible way.

Participants choose between two types of workshops: One part of the group goes into the field and, with the help of archaeological-historical methods, makes the history of the former prisoner of war camp tangible on the grounds of the memorial site and actively contributes to broadening knowledge about Stalag VIII A. The remaining participants learn creative-artistic methods and develop personal interpretations of the history of the site. At the end of the project, the entire group presents the results from the respective workshops at a public closing event.

However, the joint work is only one part of Worcation, because the project also stands for integration, intercultural experiences and having a good time. The participants get the opportunity to get to know the twin city of Görlitz/Zgorzelec and the nearby region, as well as to organise their free time according to their preferences.

Diversity, mutual respect and European cohesion are the values that shape the project and to which Worcation aims to contribute. Participants enrich each other through their knowledge, backgrounds and personalities and learn how they are connected through European history in the present.

Worcation has been Awarded the European Charlemagne Youth Prize in 2018.



Further information  
on the project and  
registration on the  
website:  
[www.worcation.eu](http://www.worcation.eu)



## **Art education history projects**

Stalag VIII A is a place that, despite all the inhumane experiences, was also shaped by art. The composer Oliver Messiaen created his famous “Quartet to the End of Time”, and plays, cultural magazines and other works of art were created, here.

Building on this heritage, we offer multi-day art-education workshops with historical input for mono- and international youth groups. We see art not only as a means of expression, but also as a medium that can make history more understandable and tangible.

A suitable project topic related to the history of Stalag VIII A is selected individually with each group. The methods and art forms used are also adapted to the needs and expectations of the group.

Possible art educational approaches (also in combination with each other):

- » Theatre (drama, puppet theatre, working with masks)
- » Music (from classical to electro to hip-hop)
- » Literature (spoken word, graphic novels)
- » Visual arts (collages, painting)
- » Film

The art-education projects last at least 4 days and end with a final presentation of the project results.

As this type of project work is particularly suitable for international groups, we encourage you to participate with bi- and multinational groups - we are happy to support you in finding partners. There is the possibility of project funding. For more information, see funding opportunities (p. 42).





# Recreational Offers

We will be happy to advise you on leisure activities during your visit to the memorial. You can find some ideas and inspiration here!

- » Guided city tour/city exploration/ city rally in the European City of Görlitz-Zgorzelec
- » Trip to Lake Berzdorf
- » Paddling on the Neisse River
- » Bicycle tours
- » City Park (Polish: Park Nadnyski)
- » Barbecues/campfires (on the Polish or German side)
- » Visit to the Rabryka Centre for Youth and Socio-Culture in Görlitz
- » Getting to know industrial culture (using the example of the Kühlhaus)
- » Theatre Görlitz
- » Municipal House of Culture (Polish: Miejski Dom Kultury)
- » Trip to Wrocław or Dresden





# Workshop fees

Please, find the fees below. The maximum group size is 30 people plus accompanying adults.

1.5-hour guided tour at the memorial (Module 1)	free of charge
Half-day rate (3 hours) with free choice of module	120 €
Full-day rate (6 hours) with free choice of module	240 €

Note: The fees shown are valid for the year 2022. We reserve the right to adjust the prices in the coming years.

# Financing Options

A visit to the memorial should not fail due to financial hurdles. We are the coordination office for international children’s and youth work in the European City of Görlitz-Zgorzelec - contact us and we will advise you on suitable financing options!



As the DPJW’s central office, we advise and support you from the application stage to the settlement of accounts for German-Polish and trilateral projects.



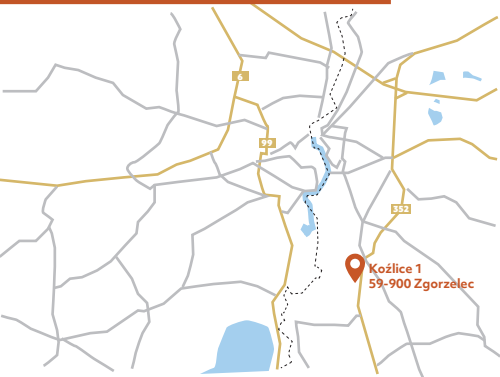
We are a place of learning of the Free State of Saxony. Groups from Saxony can receive funding for a visit to our memorial.

# Accommodation and Meals

If required, we can help you organise accommodation and meals for groups up to class size (approx. 35 people). For accommodation, we use the services of local youth hostels.

Please note that a fee will be charged for accommodation and meals. For more detailed information, please contact us!

# Directions and Contact



Please note that the memorial is not connected to the public transport network. We will be happy to help you organise your journey to the memorial and recommend a sustainable journey by

- » bus
- » railway
- » bicycle

For details, please contact us!

Our contact details:  
Mail: [info@meetingpointmm.eu](mailto:info@meetingpointmm.eu)  
Phone: +49 (0) 3581 66 12 69

Website:  
[meetingpoint-memory-messiaen.eu](http://meetingpoint-memory-messiaen.eu)



# Imprint

MEETINGPOINT MEMORY MESSIAEN e.V.

Verein für Erinnerung, Bildung, Kultur

Demianiplatz 40, D-02826 Görlitz

Phone: 03581 661 269

info@meetingpointmm.eu

VAT ID No. DE 316 622 227

IBAN: DE22 85050100 3100014951

BIC: WELADED1GRL

[www.meetingpoint-memory-messiaen.eu](http://www.meetingpoint-memory-messiaen.eu)

 <https://www.facebook.com/meetingpointmm/?ref=hl>

 <https://www.instagram.com/meetingpointmemorymessiaen/>

 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7J76POeKs6GI2BqAS8hHIA>

## EDITORIAL:

Zuzanna Kornet

Alexandra Grochowski

Marta Wyspiańska

## TRANSLATION:

Alexandra Grochowski

## PHOTO CREDITS:

Florian Gaertner: cover,

p. 3, p. 5, p. 13, p. 21, p. 27

Jakub Purej: p. 1, p. 9, p. 11, p. 15, p. 19,

p. 25, p. 30, p. 37, p. 39, p. 40,

Magdalena Antkowiak: p. 7

Agnieszka Jedrzejewska: p. 17

## GRAPHIC DESIGN:

 RZECZYOBRAZKOWE



This brochure was published as part of the DPJW Leuchttürme Programme.

Published in 2022.





**MEETINGPOINT MEMORY MESSIAEN**  
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