

ANNUAL REPORT



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ABOUT TLI


Learn, Educate, and Act for the Advancement of Human and Minority Rights

The Tom Lantos Institute (TLI) is an independent human and minority rights organisation with a particular focus on Jewish and Roma communities, Hungarian and other ethnic or national, linguistic and religious minorities. It is a Budapest-based organisation with a multi-party Board and an international Executive Committee and Advisory Board. TLI operates internationally in terms of its scope, funding, staff and partners. As a research and education platform, TLI aims to bridge the gap between both research and policy, and norms and practice.

TLI locates itself at the intersection of human rights and identity politics. While appreciating the importance of legal perspectives and remedies to violations, it investigates through multidisciplinary approaches the problem-solving capacity of existing national and international norms. TLI's principal strategic goal is the socialisation of human and minority rights through research, education, public debates, publishing, and memorialisation.

TLI focuses on three distinct issue areas. These include: Jewish life and antisemitism; Roma rights and citizenship; and human and minority rights with a special focus on Hungarian minorities. TLI identifies and explores issues and undertakes activities that are both specific and common to these fields, looking to create synergies between these programme areas whenever feasible.

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The objectives of the three programme areas are, as follows:

Jewish Life & Antisemitism

- 01** Promoting the identity and participation of Jewish communities
- 02** Countering antisemitism

Roma Rights & Citizenship

- 01** Fostering effective participation in social, economic and cultural life and in public affairs
- 02** Combating antisemitism, political, social and economic exclusion and discrimination

Human & Minority Rights

- 01** Strengthening human and minority rights education
- 02** Contributing to the effectiveness of the international regime of minority protection

The Tom Lantos Institute was established in Hungary in May 2011 following a decision by the Hungarian Government and the U.S. Senate to honour and continue the legacy of Tom Lantos, a Hungarian-American and the only Holocaust survivor ever elected to the United States Congress. A powerful voice for human rights and civil liberties throughout his life, he was the Co-Founder of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and rose to become the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. After his death, Congress permanently established the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

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RESEARCH

The genocide of the Roma and Sinti during the Second World War is still largely unknown and untaught, and Roma have been advocating for decades for its official recognition, remembrance and compensation.

On 16 May, 2015, TLI, together with *ternYpe International Roma Youth Network* and *La voix des Roms*, a Paris-based grassroots organisation, launched **a two-year research and advocacy project** entitled ***The Roma and Resistance during the Holocaust and in its Aftermath – Research, Education, Remembrance***. The aim of the project is to further investigate the resistance of the Roma in the context of the Holocaust; raise awareness through education on this specific topic and the Roma genocide in general; and, finally, to promote public remembrance. The discourse that has emerged in this context focuses nearly exclusively on the victimisation of Roma. This project creates a space for a new perspective enabling a shift from the image of an agency-lacking victim to an actor shaping their own history. This shift is crucial for fostering the dignity and respect of Roma, which, in turn, is essential for combatting the discrimination and inequality they face in Europe today. Importantly, the acknowledgment of state and societal responsibility

Our research focused on the Roma genocide and resistance during WWII and in its aftermath, and on the UN Forum on Minority Issues.

in the genocide of the Roma lays the foundations for critical dialogue and reconciliation.

The project started with a **research phase** consisting of a comprehensive literature survey and the compilation of an annotated bibliography together with the creation of a dataset of relevant archives, research institutions and organisations engaging in this particular theme in Europe.

In 2015, the Tom Lantos Institute and the *Human Rights Consortium of the School of Advanced Study* at the University of London started an innovative **research project** titled ***Global Governance of Minority Rights - Assessing the UN Forum on Minority Issues***. The UN Forum on Minority Issues (Forum) was established in 2008 as the principal global space to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between states and ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities on priority themes. By analysing the principal actors, discourses and strategies employed in this Forum, this research will be a critical case study to provide insights into the structure, dynamics and normative trends of the global governance of minority rights. This study will help to understand identity politics in international relations and the role that global governance can play in regulating security and justice for ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups. As part of the research project, TLI Director Anna-Mária Bíró participated in the 8th UN Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva in November 2015.



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TRAININGS

We co-organised two international summer schools and held training events on human rights advocacy and on collecting oral testimonies of survivors.

The above-mentioned project focusing on ***The Roma and Resistance during the Holocaust and its Aftermath*** also included a **training for Roma** youth on collecting the oral testimonies of survivors, witnesses and their descendants in their local communities, which took place in November 2015. As part of the training (co-organised by the Tom Lantos Institute and Phiren Amencia), a **roundtable discussion** was held on ***The Role of Remembrance in Creating Dialogue and Reconciliation between Roma and majority society in Hungary***. The discussion was based on five video interviews conducted on topics such as historical Roma figures, official commemorations and personal memories.

Since 2014, TLI had been participating in a regional project in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), titled *Breaking Down Barriers – Combating Violence and Discrimination against Roma through Targeted Advocacy and Regional Cooperation*.

The project aimed to equip Roma and pro-Roma activists with the capacity to conduct targeted issue-based advocacy. The programme worked with community members and trained them to engage in local activism around issues of common interest; taught them skills in information and communication technology; and gave national and regional level opportunities for select participants to promote their advocacy initiatives and connect with their peers from neighbouring countries. In the final phase of the project, in December 2015, TLI organised a study trip to Brussels for eight programme participants from Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, giving local community organisers an insight into the work of different EU institutions. MEPs from their own countries and others focused on Roma-related issues in their work helped the participants to get a better understanding of policy-making.



In 2015, the Tom Lantos Institute, together with the *CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe*, co-organised the second **European Summer School on Prejudice, Genocide, Remembrance**, which was hosted by the *Faculty of Education and Psychology of the Eötvös Loránd University*. Of 180 applicants from 35 countries, thirty participants were selected to attend the course. The diversity of the professional backgrounds and experiences of invited lecturers and trainers offered participants a wide range of perspectives and insights using various approaches – from legal and historical, to social, psychological and educational – in order to address very topical issues such as prejudice, genocide, Holocaust education and remembrance, freedom of press, or radicalisation and far-right extremism. In addition to lectures and workshops, the programme included interactive guided walks in the Jewish neighbourhood and to the Shoe Memorial on the Danube; a visit to the Gallery 8 – Roma Contemporary Art Space of the European Cultural Foundation; the launch of the exhibition on the Roma genocide in context; and a literary evening on Romani literature.

For the third time, TLI co-organised a **Global Minority Rights Summer School**, together with the *National University of Public Service* (Budapest) and the *Middlesex University London* (UK). Thirty participants with a great variety of academic, professional and socio-cultural backgrounds were selected from 430 applicants from 88 countries to attend the course in Budapest. The summer school focused on the impact of boundary politics on identity and inequality. Lecture topics covered fields including minority protection, ethnic conflict resolution, international law, geopolitics, territorial disputes and autonomies. Some sessions focused specifically on particular regions (e.g. the Middle East; frozen conflicts in the Caucasus; and Crimea), whereas many presentations applied a comparative approach to their topics, bringing examples from all over the world. The summer school ended with a one-day field trip to Komárno/Komárom, a historical town situated on the border of Slovakia and Hungary, where participants learned about the local Hungarian community and local Hungarian-Slovakian relations.

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WORKSHOPS

In 2015, again as an introduction to the Global Minority Rights Summer School, TLI organised a **workshop on *Hungarian Minorities in an International Perspective***. During the workshop, authoritative international experts reflected on and discussed a series of presentations on Hungarian minorities from respected Hungarian scholars. The presentations addressed Hungary's kin-state policies, the perceptions and the impact of double citizenship, the implementation of language rights, and the mobilisation of Hungarian minority parties in Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine.

As part of its Human and Minority Rights Programme, in 2015 the Tom Lantos Institute commissioned a **study on the situation of human rights education in Hungary**. The study provides an overview of the role of the State in human rights education; existing civil initiatives and their experiences; various aspects of the education system in relation to human rights education; the challenges of human rights education and the role it plays in higher education.

This study served as a basis for a **workshop** convened by TLI in December 2015 **on citizenship and human rights education (CHRED) in Hungary**. The meeting gathered 14 participants from civil society organisations and public institutions with the aim to have a better understanding of the current landscape of CHRED in Hungary, and to explore possible avenues for setting up a CHRED platform in Hungary. Participants discussed the current framework curriculum and the space currently available for teaching citizenship and human rights related issues; the position of civil society organisations and their cooperation with schools and public institutions; as well as the educational environment, from the training of teachers to the school reality.

The Tom Lantos Institute, together with the *Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP)* organised a two-day **international expert workshop on *Measuring Antisemitism***. Participants examined and assessed the methodologies, methods and results of existing local and international surveys aimed at measuring antisemitism, and looked at how the results are being used as references. The overall objective of the project was to contribute to the mapping of the real extent and nature of existing antisemitism internationally, in order to support local and foreign decision-makers.

The Tom Lantos Institute has taken an active role in starting a **discussion among young Jewish people about their strategic goals**. In December 2015, the TLI co-organised a **two-day workshop** together with the *Mozaik Jewish Community Hub* and the *Mazsihisz Youth Council*. The event gathered 15 participants representing 12 Jewish community organisations, programs and initiatives. The aim of the workshop was to create a community platform by launching a forum connecting young Jewish leaders and activists, enabling them to meet regularly and to have an ongoing dialogue about current issues and the future of the Jewish community in Hungary.



Our topics ranged from the situation of Hungarian minorities to human rights education and measuring Antisemitism.

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LECTURES

Reflecting on events at the time, in February 2015, **Dr. Sejal Parmar**, Assistant Professor of Law at the Legal Department of the Central European University (CEU) delivered a **public lecture** entitled ***The Paris Attacks and Global Norms on Freedom of Expression***, as part of our Public Lecture Series *From the Courtroom to the Street: Creating a Popular Culture of Human Rights*. The lecture argued that in the wake of the Paris attacks, the case for freedom of expression needs to be urgently revisited and that this should be done on the basis of international human rights standards.

In December 2015, as part of our **public lecture** series *From the Courtroom to the Street: Creating a Popular Culture of Human Rights* we organised a lecture on ***Romani Women's Holocaust Testimony and What It Tells Us About History***. The lecture was delivered by Dr. Ethel Brooks, Associate Professor at Rutgers University (USA). Dr. Brooks spoke about the importance of non-dominant narratives in research on the Holocaust.

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PUBLICATION

The Jewish Community of Győr (Hungary) established a **Local Jewish History Exhibition and Holocaust Memorial Exhibition**, showing the everyday lives, holidays and religious customs of the Jewish community, as well as the history and outstanding figures of the **Jewry in Győr**. Aimed at ensuring that the exhibition is more accessible to school groups, an **educational booklet** has been created, with the contribution of the Tom Lantos Institute. The booklet enables teachers to make the visits interactive for students, which helps them learn about Jewish customs, history and what led to the Holocaust, however, it also plays a role in introducing the Jewry as a living community.



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COMMEMORATIONS

On 27 January 2015, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, TLI organised a **commemoration** at the *Shoe Memorial on the Danube* to honour the victims of the Holocaust in order to raise public awareness and remembrance.

Besides participating in various commemorative events, on the occasion of the Commemoration Day of the Roma Holocaust (2 August), TLI displayed at its

premises from July to September 2015, an **exhibition** giving an overview of the European and Hungarian history of the Roma, from India to the present day, with special emphasis on the **Roma Holocaust**. The exhibition was created by the *Roma Civic Association (Roma Polgári Tömörülés)* and is permanently exhibited at the *Roma History, Culture, Education and Holocaust Centre* (Budapest, Hungary).

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OTHER ACTIVITIES THE TLI PARTICIPATED IN

In order to raise awareness to the issue of antisemitism and rising levels of discrimination in Europe, TLI participated in the **Solidarity Sabbath Movement** on 22 May 2015, initiated by our American sister organisation, the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice. The aim of the event was to display a united front against antisemitism and all other forms of racism, which was reflected in the attendance of participants on 22 May in a local synagogue.

In October, our programme manager for Human and Minority Rights attended the **NECE Conference “‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Citizenship Education in an Interdependent World”** in Thessaloniki, Greece. NECE is an initiative started a few years ago by the

Federal Agency for Civic Education of Germany in order to promote networking activities around the issue of citizenship education in Europe.

In December, two of our programme managers took part in a **study trip on human rights education in the Netherlands**, supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands to Hungary. During this study trip, they met with over a dozen actors from civil society organisations and public institutions working in the field of human rights and education. They also attended the 6th international human rights education conference in Middleburg and held a presentation on the challenges of human rights education in Hungary.



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INTERNSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

To complement the work of permanent staff, TLI was able to offer fellowships and internships to experts and young professionals willing to gain knowledge and skills relevant to an international human and minority rights organisation.

In 2015 TLI worked with 5 interns of varying national and educational backgrounds.

While fellows provide expert contributions to one or more programme areas or projects, interns usually

work part time and their tasks are not only determined by the organisation's needs but also by their own interests. Interns helped with various tasks including organising events, carrying out background research, proof-reading etc. TLI also offers benefits to interns and fellows depending on their interests and requests, such as setting up professional meetings and support in professional networking, the chance to attend events (conferences, lectures, meetings), and other opportunities which contribute to professional growth.

If you would like
to join TLI as an
intern or fellow,
please send us
your CV & letter
of motivation
(in English).

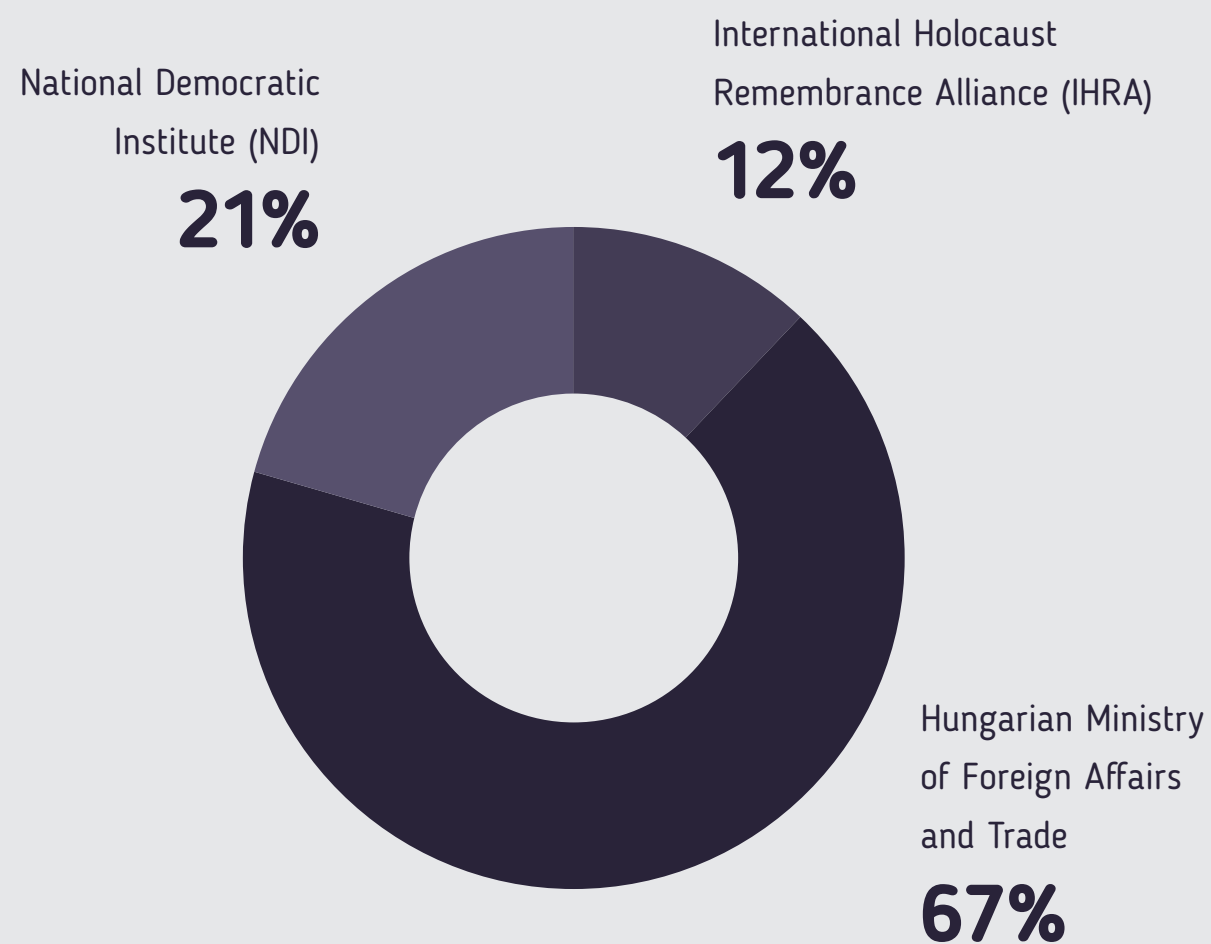
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PARTNERS

CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe
Faculty of Education and Psychology of the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE-PPK)
Human Rights Consortium of the School of Advanced Study at the University of London
Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP)
La voix des Roms
Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice
Mazsihisz Youth Council
Middlesex University London
Mozaik Jewish Community Hub
National Democratic Institute (NDI)
National University of Public Service (NUPS)
Phiren Amenca
TernYpe International Roma Youth Network

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FUNDING



The operational expenses of TLI were covered by the annual grant of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. We received project grants from various

sources. The pie chart indicates the extent to which each source contributed to the total of our project expenses in 2015.

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