

## **Post-event reflections from educators who participated in the March of the Living 2024:**

"It is still difficult to understand, grasp, and feel the trip's impressions. It probably takes more than a day or two for everything to settle down and for you to process all the information and all the emotions.

A visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau is a must for everyone. It is a strange feeling to be in a place where such cruel and incomprehensible things happened. It seems that there were no laws of humanity, only the barbaric, animal instinct to torture. Torture until one can no longer stand and dies. And the strange feeling of standing where it happened. The emptiness, the void, the sadness that pervades.

The barracks, the exhibits, the shoes, the hair, the leftover utensils, the clothes, the photos, the stories overwhelm you, making you bite your lip, not give in to your emotions, and believe that it will never happen again.

The March of the Living is an amazing experience. The feeling of togetherness and the incomprehensible scale of people from all over the world leave the best impressions, and this emotion will last a lifetime. Thank you for the opportunity to experience, discover, and be a part of the Lithuanian delegation".

*Director Modestas Vaitkevičius, Baisogala Cultural Centre*

"An unforgettable impression: that Auschwitz - this land scorched by pain, despair, sweat, and tears of the people - comes alive. People from all over the world - Argentina, Brazil, Lithuania, Austria, and other countries - are reviving this dead oasis: connecting, socializing, and embracing. What a community! And above all, they remember".

*Teacher, Coordinator of the Tolerance Education Centre Daiva Latožienė, Palanga Vladas Jurgutis Progymnasium*

"The trip to Auschwitz was a reminder that the cruelest beast in the forest is a human being; that some people can so distort the thinking and morals of a nation that the whole nation can become a cruel creature. This trip was a powerful reminder that critical thinking and humanity must be nurtured and protected, stronger than ever".

*Teacher Austėja Grinytė, Kaunas Jonas and Petras Vileišiai School*

"Sitting on the ground during the event, watching the event and being aware of what this ground has experienced, was a strong emotion and experience."

*Teacher, Coordinator of the Tolerance Education Centre Tomas Pažarauskas (Kaunas)*

"It may sound a bit strange, but I've wanted to visit the Auschwitz Museum for a long time. And the opportunity came. And it coincided with the March of the Living, which made it even more emotional. Strong. Strong both from the moral preparation for the journey and from the last steps in the territory of dehumanized history.

And what a transformation each one of us has had. Arriving at the checkpoints - conversations, a natural bustle; moving towards the complex - we fall into silence, an instinctive need to bow our heads (as a sign of respect). The entire body and brain are simply physically overwhelmed by the overwhelming aura. This is reinforced by the guide's compelling and sincere narration, our steps on the cobblestones, the stairs, our hands on the handrails, the wall, the fence, the bunks, our eyes running over mountains of people's personal belongings... It was powerful.

I would like to sincerely thank the Commission and its education project coordinator, Ingrida Vilkienė, for being ambassadors of this part of history and for paying attention to people—of the past, the present, and the future”.

*Teacher Birutė Augustanavičiūtė (Mažeikiai)*

"Every time I go to the March of the Living, I want to stay as long as it takes. Every visit, the feeling of the indescribable crowd, the mix of nations, countries, and cultures is surprising and reassuring because the eyes of young people who have traveled great distances bring hope for the future. Each visit to the Memorial requires concentration and a kind of preparation”.

*Teacher Arūnė Vačiūnaitė - Levuškinienė (Marijampolė)*

"Taking part in the March of the Living was an opportunity for me to travel and experience things that are hard to imagine, from history lessons at school to books or films alone. "The March of the Living opened my eyes and made an indelible impression on me, providing me with a considerable amount of new knowledge and experiences, inspiring me, and helping me to understand how important it is to remember and understand our history so that such human tragedies never happen again. This trip has left a deep imprint on my heart and mind, reminding me of the importance and vulnerability of human rights. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to grow, learn and develop”.

*Teacher Rasa Baciėnė, Palanga Vlado Jurgutis Progymnasium*

"The event, which brought together about 10,000 people from all over the world, made me remember the most painful events in history, to feel that indescribable feeling when you experience a sense of community in a crowd of thousands, and when you listen to the painful stories and songs of young people, you can only try to imagine the cruelty that is beyond the comprehension of your mind.”

*Erika Liukienė, Director of the Baisogala Cultural Centre in Radviliškis district*