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The Europeanization of Holocaust Memory and Eastern Europe

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Drawing upon developments in cultural and social memory studies and Europeanization theory, this article examines the Europeanization of Holocaust memory understood as the process of construction, institutionalization, and diffusion of beliefs regarding the Holocaust and norms and rules regarding Holocaust remembrance and education at a transnational, European level since the 1990s and their incorporation in the countries of post-communist Eastern Europe, which is also the area where the Holocaust largely took place. The article identifies the transnational agents of the Europeanization of Holocaust memory—the European Union's parliament, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, as well as the United Nations. It analyzes chronologically the key Holocaust-related activities and documents of these agents, highlighting East European countries' varied and changing position towards them. It examines synchronically the outcome of the Europeanization of Holocaust memory by these transnational agents—a European memory of the Holocaust—identifying its key components, discussing the main aspects, and illustrating the impact of this process and outcome upon the memory of the Holocaust in the East European countries. The article argues that the Europeanization of Holocaust memory has significantly contributed to the development of Holocaust memory in Eastern Europe, although other agents and processes were also involved.

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