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Final Evaluation Report

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Abstract (for dissemination)	The report details the overall process of the EHRI Conny Kristel Fellowship Programme and analyses the feedback received from three categories of relevant actors: fellows, evaluators, and EHRI partners. It also includes recommendations for improvements in future transnational access activities.
Management Summary	Not applicable

Table of contents

1. Overall process of EHRI Conny Kristel Fellowship distribution.....	4
2. Feedback	6
2.1. Feedback from EHRI fellows.....	6
2.2. Feedback from the evaluators.....	8
2.3. Feedback from EHRI partner institutions.....	9
3. Evaluation and recommendations.....	9

1. Overall process of EHRI Conny Kristel Fellowship distribution

At the beginning of the project, four application calls were scheduled. An external panel of three experts evaluated all applications. The external panel consists of acclaimed scholars in the field of Holocaust Research: Renée Poznanski (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel), Irena Šumi (Institute of Multicultural and Jewish Studies, Slovenia), and Dariusz Stola (Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland). They are not professionally associated with any of the EHRI partner institutions. INSHR-EW, which managed the email account to which all applications were sent, provided each reviewer with the application files (project description, CV, application form, letter of recommendation) and the review chart at the end of each cut-off period. To avoid any conflict of interest, EHRI introduced a *Recusal form* to be signed by each evaluator after being provided with the complete file of the applicants.

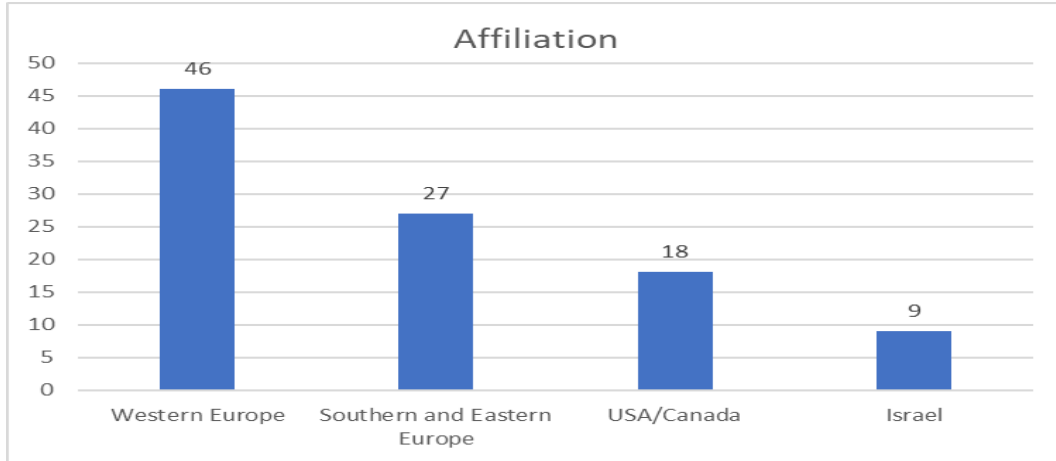
Each reviewer sent in his/her assessment (strongly recommended, moderately recommended, not recommended, and abstention) as well as comments, particularly regarding the academic content and the length and location(s) of the Fellowships chosen by the applicants. INSHR-EW gathered the reviewers' decisions and discussed them with two other partners (IfZ and YV). The list of successful candidates was subsequently sent out to the institutions they had applied for. If there were no formal and firm objections to the candidates (e.g. persons who have been banned from the respective premises in the past), the successful applicants were notified and encouraged to start organizing their stay at the respective institution(s).

At the end of their stay, the fellows were encouraged to write a report reflecting on their stay and its impact on their research or a Blog Post to the EHRI Document Blog.

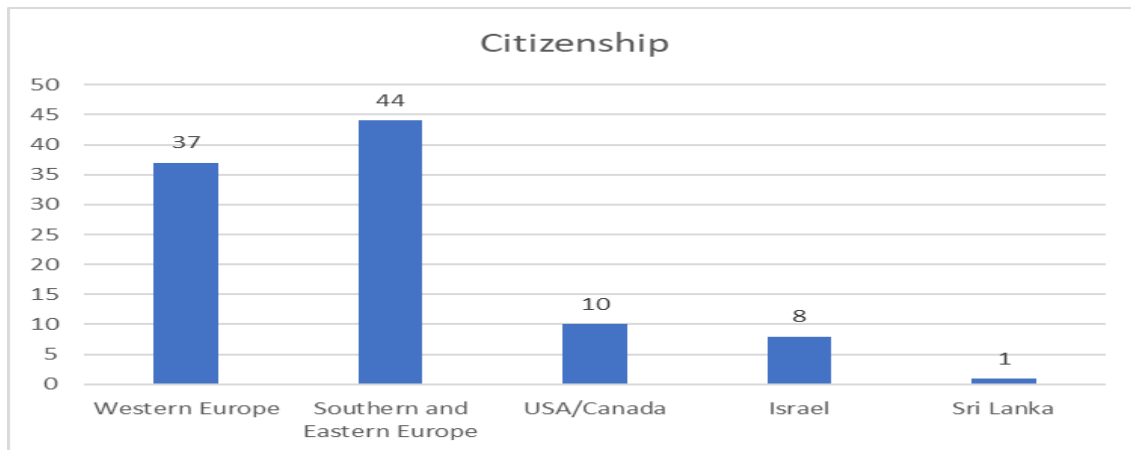
After conducting the four scheduled calls, the project was able to provide a total of 418 weeks of transnational access to 90 fellows. However, there were still various institutions that had not yet fully exhausted their fellowship budget, and the PMB decided to publish an additional call for applications. The dissemination of the call as well as the selection process followed the well-established practice of the previous calls. This extra call resulted in 10 additional fellows. For the whole application/selection procedure and during the conducting of the fellowship, INSHR-EW kept acting as the main contact for the fellows and the EHRI partner institutions involved in the fellowship program.

With this additional call, out of 173 applications, we were able to offer 100 researchers, PhD candidates, museum curators, and data specialists a total of 454 weeks of access to 17 EHRI partner institutions engaged in the fellowship program.

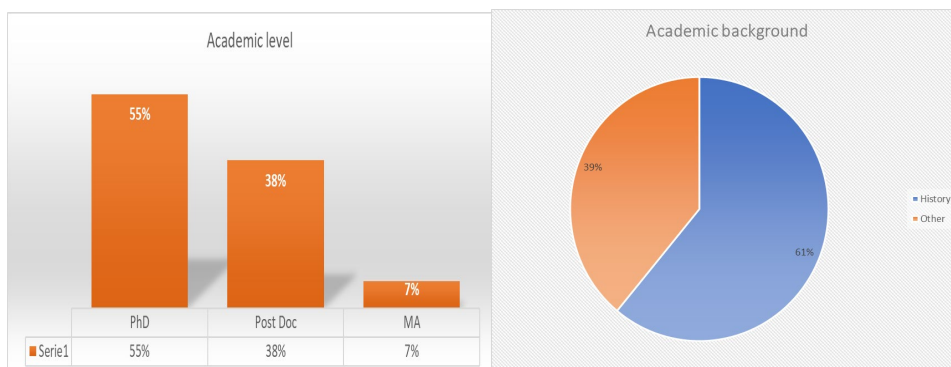
The geographic profile of the participants shows that the fellowships contributed substantially to one of EHRI's main goals: reaching out, supporting, and connecting PhD students and researchers in regions with limited access to funds and infrastructures, especially in Eastern Europe. Although the majority of fellows come from Western Europe (46%), the second largest group comes from Southern and Eastern Europe (27%).



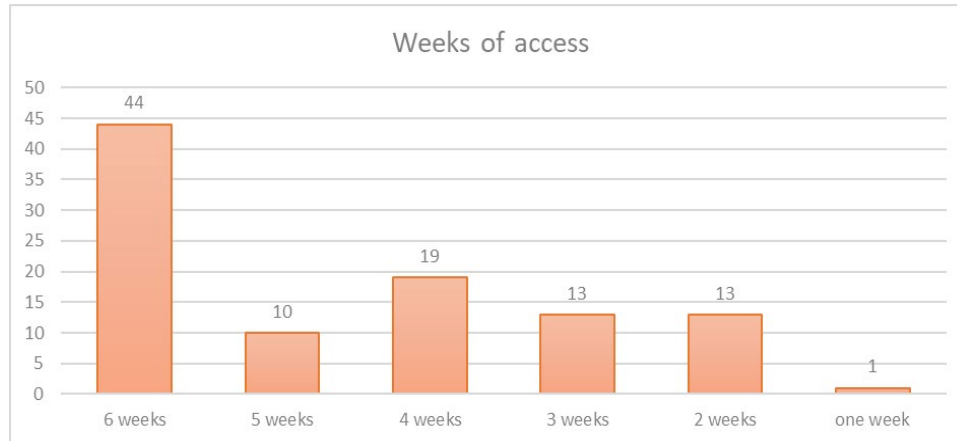
Moreover, if we consider the country of citizenship and not that of affiliation, the percentage of the fellows coming from Southern and Eastern Europe rises to 44%, becoming the main category within the distribution.



In terms of the academic profile, the Fellowship Programme attracted especially PhD candidates (55%) and PostDoc researchers (38%), most of them with a background in history (61%).



Most fellows opted for and were granted the maximum amount of weeks for their visit (6 weeks), the evaluators agreeing that it would fit their research needs.



One of the EHRI partners offering TNA, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum had designed their fellowships to address the needs of people working in reference services (librarians, archivists, data specialists, curators, memorial site staff, etc). Eventually, five specialists from this field of expertise were granted access to USHMM.

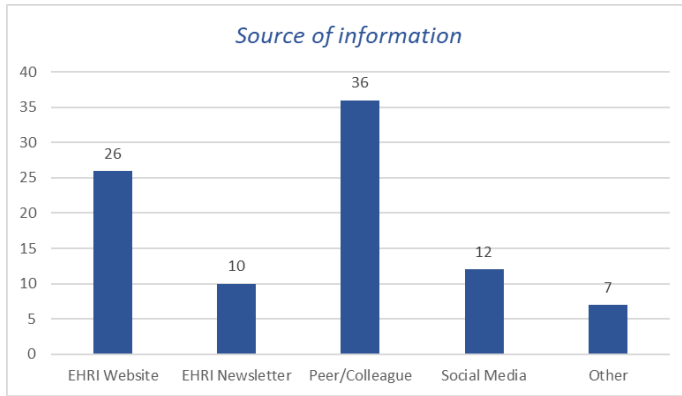
2. Feedback

2.1. Feedback from EHRI Conny Kristel Fellows

This section summarizes the feedback provided by a user survey conducted by INSHR-EW and the fellowship reports. The questionnaire was sent to all EHRI-3 fellows, and 59 of them returned the form filled in.

The overall feedback received was very positive and several aspects were repeatedly pointed out. The local EHRI coordinators of the fellowship program as well as the staff of the archives/libraries are often mentioned for their engagement, knowledge, and content-related hints they shared. Many fellows mention that onsite they often found more material than they initially expected, thanks to the knowledge of staff members or the detailed catalogs available. In addition, research was not only limited to the partner institutions but fellows also could conduct research at other archives, libraries, and research institutions in the region. Another important aspect pointed out by the fellows was the exchange and engagement with other researchers and specialists in the field. Several EHRI partner institutions offer regular exchanges between fellows and research staff so that the fellows were able to present their work among peers. Fruitful discussions, additional suggestions, and prospective cooperation were the usual outcome of these meetings.

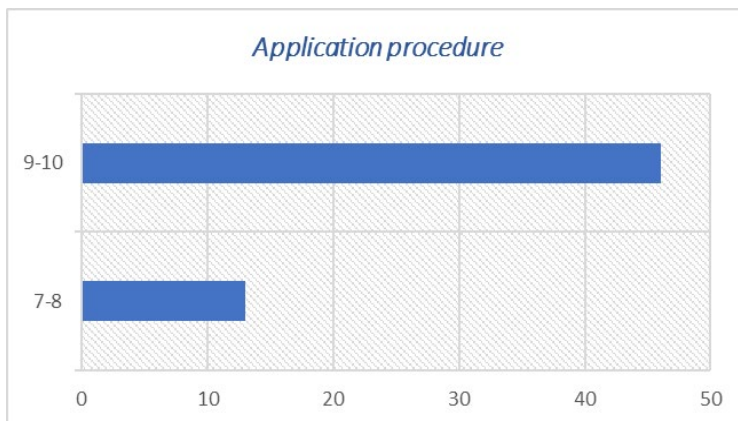
From a more technical perspective, the survey allows us to evaluate how the application and evaluation procedure was perceived by the fellows. In terms of the most successful channels to disseminate the calls, networking proves to be quite important within the academic world while the EHRI website is mentioned as an important source of information for the users.



EHRI Website	26	44%
EHRI Newsletter	10	17%
Peer/Colleague	36	61%
Social Media	12	20%
Other	7	12%

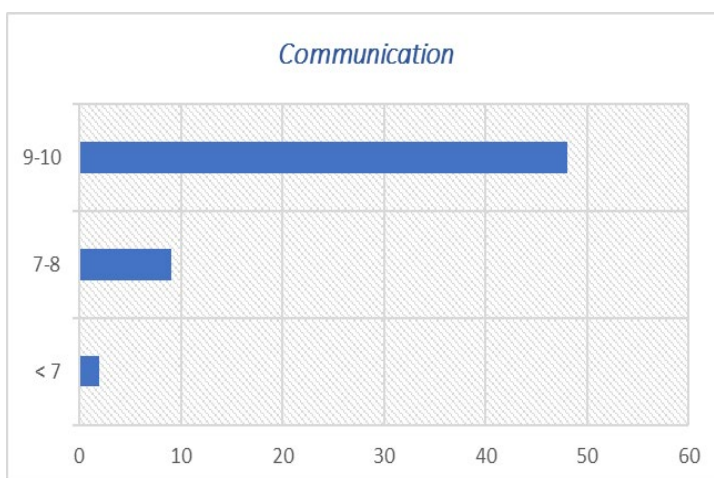
Under the fifth category (Other), there were mentioned websites of partner institutions or organizations not part of the EHRI consortium.

Within the questionnaire, the fellows were asked to evaluate how clear and simple was the application procedure, by rating it on a scale between 1 (terrible) and 10 (perfect). The results show that 78% of the respondents evaluated the procedure as close to the highest possible.



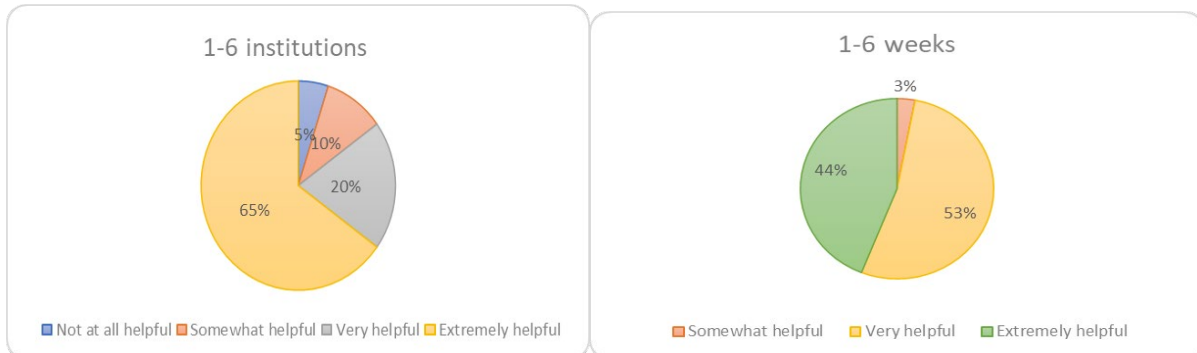
Application procedure	
7-8	9-10
13	46
22%	78%

We have found a very similar distribution of the answers regarding the general communication during application, selection, and the next steps following the announcement of the results.

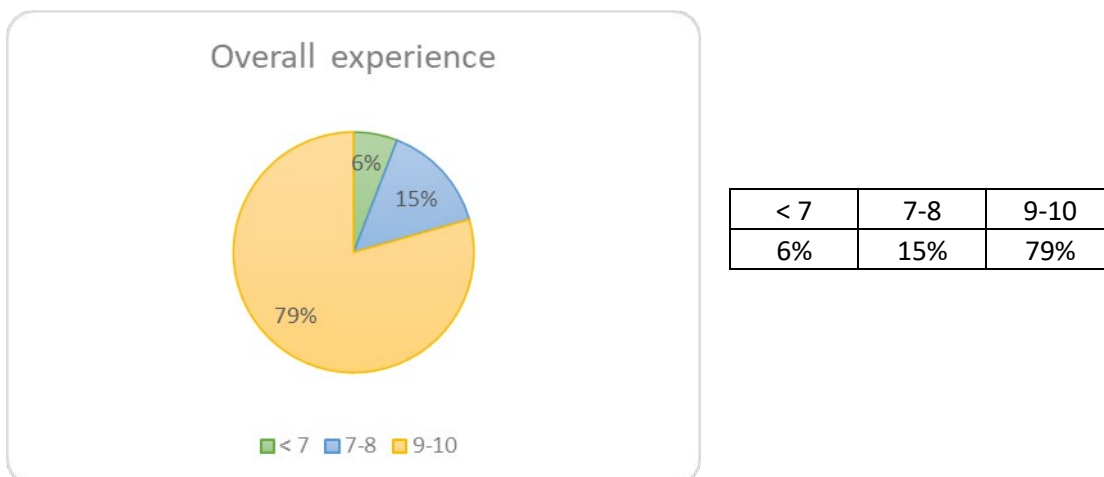


Communication		
> 7	7-8	9-10
2	9	48
3%	15%	82%

The possibility offered by EHRI to combine visits to two or more host institutions in the same fellowship was considered very or extremely helpful by 85% of those answering the questionnaire, while 97% of them considered the possibility of choosing the length of the visit as very or extremely helpful.



The overall experience of the Conny Kristel Fellowship was rated close to the highest (9/10 out of 10) by 79% of the respondents while 15 % rated it 8 out of 10.



Next to the positive feedback of the fellows, there were also some recommendations:

- Several fellows pointed to the need to have a standardized financial procedure followed for all institutions providing transnational access and to have the stipend paid per week mentioned in the call for applications.
- It would be easier for the fellows if the grant would be paid in advance.
- It would help the organization and scheduling of the visit if each partner institution would provide a calendar of national holidays to be disseminated on the EHRI website.

2.2 Feedback from the evaluators

This section summarizes the feedback provided by the three external evaluators participating in the program. The feedback was provided during a Zoom meeting organized by INSHR-EW. Concerning the selection procedure, the evaluators considered it to be very well-organized and user-friendly. To further ease the evaluation process, it was proposed to have all documents saved in a single PDF document. The evaluators also agreed that the

reference letters could be waived as they are always positive and most of the time formulated in exaggerated terms. The names of the recommender would be enough, and they could be contacted when further information is needed.

A second point made by the evaluators was the need to state in the call the strong points of a successful application: clear research objectives, methodology, innovative approach, justification of the institution(s) selected to be visited, and description of the archival collections to be consulted during the visit.

Another element mentioned by the evaluators regards those re-applying for an EHRI fellowship. In these cases, they should be asked to explain how this new application complements the results of the previous EHRI Conny Kristel Fellowship or how it develops the previous research in a new direction. All these elements should be clearly stated in the call for applications.

As the gathering of publication information from EHRI fellowships remains difficult, the evaluators proposed to include in the application form a declaration regarding this issue.

2.3 Feedback from EHRI partner institutions

The overall feedback from EHRI partner institutions is very positive. They are particularly appreciative of the networking done by EHRI, connecting researchers with their institutions, and allowing the sharing of mutually relevant knowledge. The recommendations by EHRI partners are primarily for administrative aspects rather than content-related issues. In this regard, there are differences among partners regarding the reimbursement process. While the administrative norms of some institutions provide some flexibility, others have firm rules regarding the ways the stipends are paid (for example, some institutions just transferred the stipend and reimbursed the travel costs, others only paid for what the fellow could provide a receipt for). The procedure should be harmonized for all institutions participating in the program as it is difficult to explain to a fellow visiting two or more institutions why she/he has to follow different procedures within the same Fellowship Programme.

For some countries, remote access proved to be a success even after the end of the pandemic. Therefore, when possible, the possibility of VPN access should be clearly stated in the call.

When EHRI partners were asked to provide feedback regarding their overall experience with the fellows, three aspects were mentioned several times: 1) it would be useful to double-check in the application if the applicant has the necessary language skills to study the requested material; 2) it would be useful to double check in the application if the applicant shows at least a basic knowledge of the archival holdings of the institution he/she wants to visit, and 3) as the living costs got higher in most Europe, the stipend/week should be reconsidered by EHRI for the future calls.

Finally, the institutions would like to know the outcome of the research conducted during the fellowships. As most of the fellows are PhD students working on their thesis, it can take some time for the results to be published. It is, therefore, desirable to have a standardized procedure that allows EHRI and the host institutions to receive information regarding these publications.

3. Evaluation and recommendations

All three categories of subjects offered a positive evaluation of the fellowship program, considering it a success. However, several elements were also pointed out that have the potential to make the program even more successful in the future.

This valuable feedback can be translated into the following recommendations:

1. Hold the budget so that there can be a standardized financial procedure for all institutions participating in the program. Ensure that the weekly stipend is known by the applicants at the time of their application.
2. Clearly state in the call for applications the strong points of a successful application: research objectives, methodology, innovative approach, justification of the institution(s) selected to be visited, and description of the archival collections to be consulted during the visit.
3. Draft an agreement signed by all Fellows, requesting them to provide EHRI with details about all outputs (books, articles, exhibitions, conferences, etc) that were enabled through the Fellowship; and requiring fellows to add an acknowledgment of EHRI in all publications enabled through the Fellowship.
4. Reconsider the weekly stipend for future calls.