

## Press release

### urKultur, led by Ruth Ur, to curate new Holocaust Museum of Greece in Thessaloniki

20.1.2025, Thessaloniki / Berlin. Berlin-based arts agency, urKultur, led by internationally recognised curator Ruth Ur, has been commissioned to lead on the curatorial and museological development of the Holocaust Museum of Greece in Thessaloniki.

The new museum, dedicated to the history and the Holocaust of the Greek Jews, is set to open in 2027. It is one of Greece's most ambitious cultural projects and reflects the country's full embrace of its Jewish past.

*"We are delighted to have Ruth Ur rejoin the project after she led the museum feasibility project in 2019. She is a gifted and experienced leader who can drive things forward",* says President of the Jewish Community, David Saltiel.

In 1943, from March to August, more than 46,000 Jews were displaced from Thessaloniki by the Nazis and their collaborators and taken to the death camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau and other camps, where 96% of them were exterminated. A community that had made the city a major Jewish centre and a prime commercial hub during the Ottoman period was decimated during the Holocaust.

The Holocaust Museum of Greece will highlight and pay tribute to the memory not only of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, but that of the 28 Jewish communities that existed in the country before the war. At the same time, it will illuminate the multidimensional culture of the Jews of Thessaloniki and their multifaceted contribution to the development of the city, as well as Thessaloniki itself as a multicultural and multi-religious metropolis that continues to evolve.

The museum will be located near the Old Railway Station of Thessaloniki from where Greek Jews were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

*"This museum is a vital addition to our national museum landscape. I am delighted that we now have Ruth Ur and her team on board to realise this important national project",* noted former Prime Minister Mr Panagiotis Pikrammenos, Chair of the Governmental Task Force of the Holocaust Museum.

The museum is intended to be a world-class destination, where education will play a key role in reflecting on the past and on the importance of human rights and democratic values. The Holocaust Museum of Greece will host permanent and temporary exhibitions and archives that seek to preserve and strengthen the remembrance of the Holocaust especially of the long-neglected Romaniote and Sephardi / Mediterranean Jews.

Ruth Ur, Director of urKultur, said: *"It is a tremendous honour to undertake this project. The history of the Jews of Thessaloniki and of Greece forms a core part of the history of the Mediterranean and the Balkans. Yet, it is too little known in the world. Here we have a chance, and a responsibility, to tell this remarkable story."*

U.S. based museum planning and design firm G&A Strategy and Design LLC is collaborating with urKultur on the exhibition design. The new museum has been designed by a consortium of three architectural offices Efrat Kowalsky Architects (Israel), Heide & von Beckerath (Germany) and Makridis Associates (Greece). This project represents a major achievement of public private and international partnership.

Funding is provided jointly by the Hellenic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), as well as the Genesis Prize Foundation in honor of Dr. Albert Bourla, CEO of Pfizer.

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**Notes to Editors:**

**urKultur**

urKultur is an international arts and culture agency founded by Ruth Ur in 2018 and based in Berlin. It specialises in museum strategy, innovative storytelling and curating, public art and cultural campaigns with projects across the world. For this commission urKultur has assembled a team of Greek and international historians and experts. [www.urkultur.com](http://www.urkultur.com)

**Ruth Ur**

UK-born curator and art historian Ruth Ur has curated numerous exhibitions related to Jewish life and the Holocaust, including twice in succession winning the prestigious commission to curate the annual exhibition at the German Bundestag (*Sixteen Objects: Seventy years of Yad Vashem* (2023) and *I said, "Auf Wiedersehen": 85 years since the Kindertransport to Britain* (2024)). From 2019 to 2024, Ur was the representative of the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre Yad Vashem in Germany. Previously she held senior leadership positions with the British Council from 1998 to 2017, serving as UK cultural attaché, most notably, in Israel and Turkey.

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