

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system. ⚠ Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Memory Futures, MF
Participant:	Limmud Baltics Liit, Limmud Baltics
PIC number:	896042933

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP13
Event name:	LIMMUD BALTICS FESTIVAL “TOUCH THE FUTURE”
Type:	Conference
In situ/online:	In situ
Location:	Lielupe, Jurmala, Latvia
Date(s):	08-11.02.2024
Website(s) (if any):	Limmud Baltics – Limmud Baltics; Program 2024 – Limmud Baltics; https://limmudeurope.org/event/limmud-baltics-festival-touch-the-future/
Participants	
Female:	114
Male:	101

Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Estonia]:	45		
From country 2 [Latvia]:	116		
From country 3 [Lithuania]	30		
From country 4 [Austria]	3		
From country 5 [Bulgaria]:	2		
From country 6 [Germany]	12		
From country 7 [Hungary]	2		
From country 8 [Poland]	1		
From country 9 [Slovakia]	2		
From country 10 [Finland]	1		
From country 11 [Italy]	1		
Total number of participants:	215	From total number of countries:	11
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>Limmud Baltics “Touch the Future” conference 2024 was dedicated to modern technologies and their impact on society from a Jewish perspective. The event, held in Jurmala, Latvia, from February 9th to 11th, 2024, gathered 215 EU residents who participated in a series of activities, including lectures, discussion panels, movie screenings, concerts, and craft master classes.</p> <p>A significant majority of our participants hailed from the Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—underscoring the conference's deep-rooted connection and significance to the regional community. Additionally, we were delighted to welcome a substantial number of attendees from across the European Union, including Finland, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, Italy, Germany, and Austria, showcasing the conference's appeal and relevance beyond our immediate geographical boundaries. This diverse representation highlighted the event's attraction to individuals from the Danube region and Eastern Europe, emphasizing its importance in fostering a broad, inclusive dialogue on contemporary Jewish issues.</p> <p>One of the central themes of the conference was the value of “Expanding Jewish Horizons,” explored in connection with the “Memory Futures” grant. The team aimed to address how modern technologies (such as AI, space exploration, and advancements in medicine) intersect with our historical legacy. To facilitate this exploration, several key questions were posed:</p>			

- How might Jewish history help us adapt to the new age of technological revolution?
- What does modern and future European Jewish identity look like in the context of rapid technological advancement?
- What can we learn from Jewish history to mitigate potential trauma in the face of modern political instability?
- How can the global Jewish community combat growing antisemitism while Israel continues to assert its right to exist?
- In what ways can technology be leveraged to preserve and enhance Jewish cultural heritage and memory?
- How can Jewish ethical teachings inform the development and use of emerging technologies?
- What role does Jewish education play in preparing future generations to navigate and contribute to a technologically advanced world?
- How can Jewish communities across Europe collaborate to create a unified response to the challenges posed by modernity?

These and other questions helped identify the pressing issues facing modern Jewish society in Europe and globally. The conference provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and the exchange of ideas, fostering a deeper understanding of how Jewish tradition and modernity can coexist and enrich one another.

As the Israel war story unfolded, we compiled a dedicated track addressing the events of October 7, 2023, and their aftermath. Representatives from the Israeli Embassy in Latvia, the Head of Nativ, historians, and economists spoke about the political, economic, and social impacts. We organized a round table on the influence of the Israeli war on Jewish communities worldwide. Given the growing insecurity due to rising antisemitism, participants were keen to understand the communication dynamics between the Diaspora and Israel during these tragic times.

The war in Israel is undoubtedly a tragedy for Israel and Jewish communities globally, but it is also a story of courage, kindness, and humanity in the face of terror. Our speakers discussed volunteer efforts in the first days after October 7th. A session was dedicated to integrating people who escaped Russia after the war in Ukraine started and their inspirational work in helping those in need. Even in difficult times, creativity thrives. A special lecture was dedicated to the poetry of Operation Iron Swords, and the Dancing group Eilat from Riga performed a touching tribute to commemorate the terrorist attack on Israel in October 2023.

One of the highlights of Limmud Baltics 2024 was Roman Kachanov, a renowned producer and film director. Kachanov screened his film "Aryeh," which received a warm reception. We also arranged a round table with him to discuss the depiction of Jews in modern cinema. This discussion highlighted how Jewish history is often exploited for political purposes and how cinema plays a role in this process, influencing political situations worldwide.

Israel's future endeavors were also a key focus. Participants learned about Israel's space program and its plans to conquer the Moon. Eyal Ben-Ze'ev, a leader of the Israel Mars program, and Lev Lapkis spoke about the contributions of Latvia and Israel to the global space program. Igor Marhasin discussed NGO SpaceIL's mission to Mars, and Juri Ostrinski presented on medical innovations in Israel, a country renowned for its achievements in healthcare.

Political discourse always attracts a significant audience. Our speakers delivered powerful messages about various global political changes, the influence of local communities on these shifts, and the actions individuals can take to effect social change.

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