

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Rescue Memory - Activism, Arts and Public Remembrance – ReActMem
Participant:	FESTIVAL (F-ALT)
PIC number:	895375767

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	WP 50		
Event name:	FestivALT 2025		
Type:	Series of events (workshops, performances, talks, a conference)		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	Krakow, Poland		
Date(s):	20-29.06.2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://reactmem.difficultheritage.eu/en/event/festivalt-2025-2/ https://festivalt.com/edition/9-festivalt-20-29-06-2025/		
Participants			
Female:	131		
Male:	75		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 Slovakia:	3		
From country 2 Spain:	1		
From country 3 France:	4		
From country 4: Poland	198		
Total number of participants:	206	From total number of countries:	4
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
The 9th edition of FestivALT took place in Kraków from 20–29 June 2025, bringing together artists, academics, educators, activists, and members of the public for ten days of performances, exhibitions, concerts, film			

screenings, workshops, lectures, public discussions, and community gatherings exploring Jewish memory, difficult heritage, democracy, and contemporary social challenges.

The festival was organised under the theme **Hope**. As stated in the curatorial introduction, the programme responded to "a world increasingly marked by war, polarization, rising antisemitism, and the erosion of shared values," approaching hope not as passive optimism but as an active civic and cultural practice. Through contemporary art, critical reflection, and public dialogue, the festival sought to create spaces where audiences could engage with difficult histories while imagining more inclusive and democratic futures.

The 2025 edition also marked an important milestone for FestivALT by welcoming Israeli artists to the festival programme for the first time, creating new opportunities for artistic exchange and dialogue across different cultural and historical experiences. Shortly before the festival opened, however, the rapidly escalating conflict between Israel and Iran had a direct impact on implementation. Following the closure of Israeli airspace, one scheduled event had to be cancelled because one of the participating artists was unable to travel. More broadly, the organisers responded to the evolving geopolitical situation by deliberately presenting a more intimate and reflective programme than in previous editions. Rather than expanding the scale of activities, the festival prioritised smaller artistic encounters, conversations, and community gatherings that reflected the emotional climate of the moment and encouraged careful listening, dialogue, and mutual understanding.

Although the programme had been conceived many months before the escalation, the coincidence of the festival with these events gave its themes an unexpected immediacy. Questions explored throughout the programme—how societies live with violence, how trauma is transmitted across generations, how communities remain open to dialogue despite deep disagreement, and how hope can be sustained during periods of uncertainty—were no longer only historical or artistic inquiries, but became matters of immediate public concern. This convergence gave discussions throughout the festival particular depth and demonstrated the continuing relevance of artistic practice as a means of responding to contemporary crises through historical reflection and democratic dialogue.

The programme included theatre performances, contemporary art exhibitions, concerts, documentary film screenings, artist talks, lectures, participatory workshops, and public conversations. Highlights included the opening **Shabbat by the Vistula**, the exhibitions **Life Is With People** and **Hymns to the Goddess**, the performances **Voice from the Heart of Hell**, **Ta'am**, **Epitaph**, and **The Longlasting Project**, the **KulturDocs** documentary screening and discussion, and the participatory workshop **(Re)collecting Post-Jewish Objects**. Together, these events addressed themes including historical responsibility, collective memory, identity, migration, minority experiences, democratic resilience, and the role of culture in confronting exclusion and prejudice.

A defining feature of FestivALT 2025 was its emphasis on conversation. Most artistic events were accompanied by moderated discussions, question-and-answer sessions, artist talks, or participatory formats, enabling audiences to engage directly with artists, scholars, and cultural practitioners. These conversations encouraged critical reflection on the continuing legacy of twentieth-century history, contemporary manifestations of antisemitism and discrimination, and the capacity of culture to challenge inherited narratives while fostering empathy, civic participation, and mutual understanding.

Despite the operational challenges posed by the international situation, the festival successfully delivered the vast majority of its programme and demonstrated the importance of maintaining independent cultural spaces during periods of uncertainty. Audience engagement confirmed the continued demand for thoughtful, interdisciplinary approaches to difficult heritage, while the festival reinforced FestivALT's role as a platform where contemporary artistic practice, historical scholarship, and civic dialogue intersect to address some of the most pressing questions facing European societies today.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2024	Initial version (new MFF).
2.0	22.06.2026	Changed the estimated number of participating countries (from 10–12 to 4–6), changed the estimated number of participants (from at least 276 to 176–200), and reduced the allocated budget (from EUR 47,570 to EUR 31,715).

