Lithuania to expand cooperation with YIVO Institute for Jewish Research to protect and promote the history and heritage of Lithuanian Jews

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On 4 April, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Mantas Adomėnas met with Jonathan Brent, the Executive Director and CEO of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York, who is visiting Vilnius.

Brent warmly thanked the Foreign Ministry for its help to implement the Edward Blank Vilna Collections Project - a seven-year joint initiative of YIVO and three Lithuanian memory institutions: the Lithuanian Central State Archives, the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, and the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. The project aimed at processing, preserving, and digitally reuniting YIVO's pre-war library and archival collections.

According to Brent, this project has once again demonstrated to the world how consistently Lithuania explores and fosters its cultural and historical heritage.

YIVO will continue to research, digitise and preserve the archives in cooperation with the aforementioned institutions, as well as with the Lithuanian National Museum of Art. Adomėnas noted that it would be also worthwhile for YIVO to cooperate with memory institutions located in other Lithuanian cities, such as Kaunas Regional State Archives, the Vytautas Magnus University Archive, and larger regional museums.

As regards Vilnius' upcoming 700th anniversary in 2023 and YIVO's 100th anniversary in 2025, Adomėnas suggested celebrating jointly by organising cultural events and institutionalising the cooperation between Lithuania and YIVO. Special attention will be given to the French novelist of Litvak origin - Romain Gary.

The meeting also focused on issues pertaining to YIVO's Educational and Media Centre and the possible establishment of a branch of YIVO in Vilnius. According to Brent, this is realistic, but the issues of location and financing of those institutions have to be addressed first.