



Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes: Statement by Vice-President Jourová and Commissioner Reynders

Brussels, 20 August 2021

Ahead of the Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes on 23 August, Vice-President for Values and Transparency, Věra **Jourová**, and Commissioner for Justice, Didier **Reynders**, issued the following statement:

"Over eighty years ago, on 23 August 1939, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed between Germany and the Soviet Union just before the Second World War broke out. For many, this fateful day marked the beginning of a cycle of Nazi and Soviet occupation and violence.

On this day, we pay tribute to those who fell victim to totalitarian regimes in Europe and those who fought against such regimes. We recognise the suffering of all the victims and their families, as well as the lasting effect that this traumatic experience left on the following generations of Europeans.

Let us work together so that our shared past makes us stronger for the shared future – and does not drive us apart.

Freedom from totalitarianism and authoritarianism is not a given. It is something we need to stand up for every day anew. It is at the heart of the European ideal. Together with the rule of law and democracy, this freedom is at the core of the European Treaties we have all signed. We must continue to stand, united, for these fundamental European values."

Background

The Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes has been celebrated since 2009, when the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for the "proclamation of 23 August as a Europe-wide Remembrance Day for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, to be commemorated with dignity and impartiality".

It is an occasion to keep alive the memory of the victims, millions of whom continued to suffer long after the end of World War II and the defeat of the Nazi regime.

The European Commission supports projects across Europe that address the history of totalitarian crimes and encourage remembrance. Building on the Europe for citizens programme 2014-2020, the new Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme supports remembrance actions on the causes of totalitarian regimes, in particular Nazism, but also fascism, Stalinism and other totalitarian communist regimes.

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