

Message by President Jean-Claude Juncker on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day 2018

The 27th of January is a date marked in history by sorrow and grief. On this day 73 years ago, Allied Forces liberated the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau and brought the horrors perpetrated there to an end. To mark this event, we honour today the memories of the six million Jews and other victims who perished during the Holocaust. We also pay tribute to those who survived the Shoah, among them the first President of the European Parliament Simone Veil, who dedicated her life to reconciliation and who has sadly passed away this past year.

2018 marks the 80th anniversary of the 'Reichspogromnacht' (Night of the Broken Glass) and the 80th anniversary of the introduction of racist laws in Fascist Italy. But 2018 also represents the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which grew out of the horrors of the Holocaust.

This day should remind us to be vigilant in the face of hatred, discrimination and dehumanisation. It is a day to confront those who spread lies about our history and who question the Holocaust or negate its fundamental meaning for today's Europe. As Simone Veil reminded us, it is necessary to recall the names and stories of those we have lost, to spare them from disappearing for a second time.

This is a day to firmly condemn hatred, bigotry and Antisemitism in all its forms. We need to build a strong society that stands up for what is right. We need people to speak up and act when they see racist acts in public or when they hear antisemitic slogans on European streets as we have witnessed recently.

As the number of remaining Holocaust survivors decreases, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that their story remains part of Europe's collective memory, also for the young generations. The Commission will therefore strengthen our cooperation with international organisations working on Holocaust Remembrance, as also requested by the European Parliament. Holocaust education remains central to building up resilience against all forms of hatred in our European societies, and the European Parliament has provided a useful definition of Antisemitism for better education and training.

Antisemitism is not only a threat for Jews but a fundamental menace to our open and liberal societies. Remembering the atrocities of the Holocaust, this darkest chapter of modern European history, is essential for understanding the value of having a European Union today. It is to prevent these horrors that we founded a Union based on universal human rights, democracy, the rule of law and non-discrimination, and it is in the name of those values that we need to preserve it and constantly improve it.

Jean-Claude **Juncker**
President of the European Commission