

# Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Jourová on the Europe-Wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes

*Today, 23 August, we mark the Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. We remember the victims of these regimes and we restate our rejection of the ideologies they were built on.*

*On 23 August 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which marked the beginning of one of the darkest periods in the recent history of our continent. Totalitarian regimes across Europe restricted people's freedoms; violated their rights and made millions of ordinary citizens victims of their ideology.*

*We must remember past horrors to give us the knowledge and strength to reject those who seek to revive these ideologies. The European Union was built on the common values of human dignity, fundamental rights, rule of law and democracy, and on the rejection of extreme nationalism. We must never take these rights and freedoms for granted. We pledge to fight for them every day.*

*Extremism, nationalism, xenophobia and hatred can still be heard in public speech in Europe. Keeping these memories alive is not only a tribute to the victims but also a way to ensure that these ideologies can be forcefully rejected and such atrocities never happen again.*

*We stand firm in our defence of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, in Europe and worldwide. There is no place in the European Union for extremism, intolerance and oppression.*

## **Background**

The signature of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on 23 August 1939 led to the deportation, torture and murder of tens of millions of people under totalitarian regimes.

While the end of World War II marked the defeat of the Nazi regime, many Europeans continued for decades to suffer under totalitarian regimes.

Video: [First Vice-President Frans Timmermans on European Patriotism](#)