



Message by President Jean-Claude Juncker to the Jewish community on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day 2016

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"Condemned to hide" – I never imagined I would see headlines like this in my lifetime. I never imagined a Rabbi in Marseille would have to tell his Community it might be better to hide the kippa, I never imagined that Jewish schools and Synagogues would have to be guarded, I never imagined a Europe where Jews feel so insecure that immigration to Israel reaches an all-time high. 71 years after the liberation of Auschwitz this is intolerable.

Europe cannot and will not accept this. Attacks on Jews are attacks on all of us – against our way of living, against tolerance and against our identity. Today's Europe has a lot to be proud of but we must never forget where we come from: Europe saw the worst horrors that humans can inflict on each other. This tragedy lies deep in our soul when we commemorate today the death of 6 million Jews – men, women and children – 6 million unlive lives. But as Claude Lanzmann once explained, the Hebrew word for honouring the death also means to remember and to recall – and Europe's responsibility is to remember for the future.

Never again! This was the solemn promise of our founding fathers when they rebuilt this continent on the debris of WWII and the ashes of the Shoah. Since those dark days Europe has come a long way: we have enshrined European values, democracy and fundamental rights in our Treaties. They are the foundation of our Union and our institutions. These values are not a given, we need to defend them every day – especially in difficult times. This is a matter of humanity and a historical responsibility. It is our moral duty to help those who are in need of shelter, who are fleeing from war, dictatorship and religious and political persecution. At the same time we must counter the dangerous rise of extremism, racism, xenophobia, nationalism and Anti-Semitism.

Our entire society has a duty to prevent Anti-Semitism and we must fight it on every corner – whether on the extreme right or the extreme left or when it is instigated by extreme Islamists. The European Commission is doing everything in its powers: We recently appointed a coordinator on combating Antisemitism, we ensure that legislation tackling Anti-Semitism – as well as racism and xenophobia more generally – is correctly applied across all Member States. This includes Holocaust denial which is already prohibited by EU law, but 15 countries still don't apply it properly. I want Europe to be a home for all communities.

We are determined: Never again. Because a Europe of hate is one that we refuse. Because a Europe without Jews would be no longer Europe.

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