



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

Brussels, 21 August 2020

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:

*“On 23 August, 81 years ago, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact plunged Europe into darkness. The agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union divided Central and Eastern Europe. It led to the violation of the fundamental rights of millions of Europeans and it claimed the lives of millions more.*

*Every 23 August is a day to recall the lessons of this frightful past, to remember those who suffered at the hands of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes across our continent and to pay tribute to those who fought for a better future.*

*Freedom from totalitarianism and authoritarianism is not a given. It is a hard-won way of life that we should cherish every day. We chose this freedom when we signed our European Treaties – the freedom to live in dignity, to choose how our nations are governed, and to determine our own future. We must continue to stand strong for these 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.

Through the Europe for citizens programme, the European Commission supports projects across Europe which address the history of totalitarian crimes and encourage remembrance.

STATEMENT/20/1503

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