

## **Local EU Statement on Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah)**

*The European Union Delegation issues the following statement in agreement with the EU Heads of Mission in Israel:*

The Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel, together with the 26 Embassies of EU Member States present in Israel, remember today with a sense of deep responsibility the six million Jews brutally killed on European soil in the Holocaust together with other victims of Nazism during the darkest hours of humankind.

We join Israelis and Jews all over the world in mourning the Jewish men, women and children murdered by the Nazis and their helpers. We pay tribute to those who survived the unthinkable horrors of the Holocaust and rebuilt their lives in Israel, Europe and across the world. It is our collective duty to make sure that the horrors of the Holocaust are never forgotten.

The central theme of this year's Yom HaShoah is "*Until the Very Last Jew: Eighty Years Since the Onset of Mass Annihilation.*" We remember that 80 years ago, in June 1941, Nazi Germany launched "Operation Barbarossa," which marked the beginning of an official policy of systematic mass murder of Jews in Ponary, a forest outside Vilnius, at Babi Yar, on the outskirts of Kiev, and in Odessa, and in concentration and extermination camps across the continent.

We pledge to do everything in our power to fight attempts to deny, trivialise or distort the Holocaust. The European Commission, together with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the United Nations and UNESCO, launched in January 2021 a digital campaign entitled *#ProtectTheFacts*, to raise awareness and develop knowledge about Holocaust distortion.

We stand against traditional and contemporary forms of anti-Semitism, including recent conspiracy theories falsely blaming Jews for COVID-19. We will strenuously counter such lies wherever and whenever we encounter them and continue to fight anti-Semitism and other hate crimes.

The European Commission has tripled the EU budget for Holocaust remembrance, education and research as of 2022, and later this year will present the first-ever EU comprehensive strategy to combat antisemitism and foster Jewish life. Holocaust remembrance, education and distortion will be among the central pillars of this strategy.

Jorge Santayana once wrote: '*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*' And therein lays the importance of remembrance today. Never Forget!

*This is a joint statement agreed by the Ambassador of the European Union to the State of Israel and the Ambassadors of all European Union member states represented in Israel, i.e. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.*