

Press Release

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27 January - Holocaust Remembrance Day

Statement by Ján Kubiš, Chairman-in-office of the Committee of Ministers

Strasbourg, 25.01.2008 - On the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Ján Kubiš, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia and chairman-in-office of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, re-confirmed the commitment of his country to continue to combat all forms of racial, ethnic, religious and political intolerance and discrimination. Recalling that it was the horrors of the Second World War that led to the Council of Europe being founded, Mr. Kubiš underlined the Organisation's fundamental role in fighting the phenomena that led to these atrocities.

Minister Kubiš expressed his conviction that teaching younger generations about the Holocaust was a prerequisite for making Europe free from racism in all its forms. The Minister emphasised that explaining the facts about this particularly dark period in European history to children was our duty because "we thereby give them the means to prevent any reoccurrence of these tragic events".

For these reasons, the Slovak Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers intends to intensify co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF). The current ITF Chair, Ambassador Miloš Pojar from the Czech Republic, has been invited for an exchange of views with representatives of the Council of Europe member states on 29 January 2008. A ceremony in honour of the Holocaust victims will be held at the Council of Europe on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

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Meeting in Strasbourg in 2002, the European Ministers of Education decided to set up a "Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the prevention of crimes against humanity". This day has since been celebrated on 27 January every year and the idea has also been taken up by the United Nations, which has declared it an international day of remembrance.

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