



with the support of



in the occasion of the

European Day of Remembrance for the Righteous

organizes

REMEMBERING IN THE FUTURE

Policies and practices of REMEMBRANCE

to prevent mass atrocities

7th March 2013, European Parliament (Room Altiero Spinelli 5G1), Brussels

Media partner



BACKGROUND

Affirming that 'the remembrance of good is essential to the process of European integration because it teaches younger generations that everyone can always choose to help other human beings and defend human dignity, and that public institutions have a duty to highlight the example set by people who managed to protect those persecuted out of hate', the European Parliament adopted a written declaration on support for the establishment of a European Day of Remembrance for the Righteous.

For the European Union to commemorate 'those who preserved human dignity during Nazism and Communist totalitarianism' and 'who challenged crimes against humanity and totalitarianism with individual responsibility' is a new and remarkable addition to the existing remembrance ceremonies, legislative measures and political efforts established and adopted to prevent future mass atrocities. That this commemoration is a European pledge undoubtedly highlights its utmost significance: if Europe was the theatre of some of the most heinous deeds perpetrated in the name of totalitarian and criminal ideologies, it was also the place where individuals chose to put their own lives at risk to fight for freedom and to save other human beings.

Europe, theatre of the obscene, also witnessed among the most heroic acts performed by ordinary men and women who risked everything to defend freedom, human rights and human dignity.

The inescapable connection made in this Declaration between 'the remembrance of good' and European integration is essential. First, it emphasises the important education value of the remembrance of good, which aims at teaching younger generations and ultimately prevent the repetition of past crimes. There is indeed no doubt that with remembrance and education come action and prevention. It is the recollection of the past that will shape the future and pave the way for avoiding the repetition of past mistakes. Prevention is the most effective form of protection for vulnerable groups in a society. The failure of preventing the massive crimes of the last century has shown not only to be costly in terms of loss of lives but has largely affected people and societies that are still struggling with past conflicts. This has stimulated the conviction to further consolidate the construction of a reliable preventive framework for avoiding the recurrence of the major crimes of the last century.

Second, and perhaps more strikingly, this Declaration imposes a duty on public institutions 'to highlight the example set by people who managed to protect those persecuted out of hate'. The on-going failure to prevent events of genocide and occurrences of mass violence sheds serious doubt as to the effectiveness of political commitments and promises and imposing a duty on public institutions is also recognition of responsibility. Remembering historical events has led the European continent to commit to peace and to adopt a series of anti-xenophobic policies and this is of course to be applauded. Yet, practice has so far failed to live up to the theoretical expectations and, more often than not, the political engagements have remained dead letter, declarations of good intentions, with a huge symbolical power but no practical implementation.

This workshop thus proposes to go beyond the theory and to review, from a practical point of view, the apparatus and mechanisms installed at the European level to generate remembrance and prevention. More specifically, it will explore European anti-xenophobic and anti-genocidal policies to assess their enforcement in practice and will address questions which, while fundamental, have so far remained overlooked. The purpose of this workshop is to review and assess the role of the different actors in both the decision-making and the implementation processes and to identify the practical obstacles faced in these two stages of the process so as to ultimately suggest what the next steps should be and which directions they should take.

"Remembering in the Future" is an event that was created by the European Centre for International Affairs, MEPs Niccolò Rinaldi and Ivo Vajgl of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, European Parliament, with the support of the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, the Centre for Global Security and Governance of the University of Aberdeen, and the University of Groningen, with the intent to reflect on the strategies that the European Union is adopting in the field of remembrance and prevention of mass atrocities.

PROGRAMME

Start: 11:00 – 11:30 Welcome Panel

Niccolò Rinaldi – MEP, Vice President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, European Parliament

Ivo Vajgl (video-speech) – MEP, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, European Parliament

Alfonso Giordano - ECIA Managing Director, Professor at LUISS University of Rome

11:30 – 12:00 Keynote Speech

Adama Dieng - Special Advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations on the Prevention of Genocide

12:00 – 13:30 Panel 1 – Remembrance and Denial Legislation

Chair: Caroline Fournet - ECIA Fellow, Associate Professor and Rosalind Franklin Fellow at the Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen

Pavel Tychtl – Policy Officer, Active European Remembrance, DG Communication European Commission

Remembering and Preserving Memory to Protect Fundamental Values and Dignity for Human Rights

Eva Sobotka – Programme Manager, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
Holocaust and Human Rights Education

Nicolas Tavitian - EU Representative, AGBU-Armenian General Benevolent Union
Commemorating the Righteous: Gariwo's Perspective

Chiara De Franco – Research Fellow at King's College of London, Coordinator of the Task Force for the Improvement of the EU's Capabilities to Prevent Mass Atrocities
The EU, the Media, and the Promotion of a Narrative of Prevention

Q & A session

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch Break

Guest of Honor: Ong Thong Hoeung, Writer on the Cambodian genocide

14:30 – 16:00 Panel 2 - Prevention

Chair: Enzo Maria Le Fevre Cervini - ECIA Fellow, Director of Research and Cooperation of the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities

Ekkehard Strauss – Researcher, Member of the Task Force on the EU Prevention of Mass Atrocities

The EU and the Prevention of Mass Atrocities: An Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses

Jan Jařab – EU Regional Representative, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
The Legacy of Hate: Contemporary Racism in Europe and its Historic Sources

Michael Salter and Andrea Grieder – University of Central Lancashire and University of Zurich
EU Legislative Interventions on Combating Genocide Denial

Q & A session

16:00 – 16:30 Concluding Remarks

Andrea Teti - ECIA Research Director for Societal Issues, Director of the Centre for Global Security and Governance, University of Aberdeen

Gyorgy Tatar – Director of the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities