

**Justice Ministers Conference Joint Statement of the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian,
Poland and Romanian Ministry of Justice on The European Day of Remembrance for
Victims of Communism and Nazism on the 23rd of August 2016**

On the 23rd of August 1939, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, as allies, on behalf of their representatives, Molotov and Ribbentrop, signed a protocol dividing their sphere of influence, which led on to murder, terror and a horrendous end for many millions of innocent souls. Fortunately, the Nazi Germany regime collapsed in 1945, and their perpetrators and crimes were extensively researched, and the ones responsible were effectively charged in court.

The Soviet Union and the occupation of half of Europe lasted for another half a decade. Only in 1989, the Iron Curtain was torn down, in 1991 the Soviet Union dissolved and the occupied countries once again became free and independent nations and future members of the European Union and NATO.

There is a need to equally condemn all totalitarian regime crimes and a need to eradicate the feeling of impunity of the ones who were involved with these crimes. There is a need to carry on this knowledge for current and future generations, in order to avoid such atrocities to reoccur. We have a moral onus on making our loud voice heard on behalf of all of the people whose lives were criminally and through utter terror cut short by totalitarian regimes. Europe is built and based on justice and we are responsible for implementing it.

We are deeply concerned about the actions by the countries, who actively are involved in promoting extremism and hate crime in Europe, both online and through extremist parties. We all have to stand united against such actions.

We are also deeply concerned about the fact that some countries are officially glorifying the Soviet Union and the leaders of the totalitarian regime. This is unacceptable, especially towards the victims, who were murdered or suffered under the regime of terror.

Therefore there is an imminent need to condemn Communist crimes. If Europe as a whole and individual nations will not deal with this issue, to clearly state the horrendous crimes and large-scale terror which was committed by totalitarian regimes, then we will face naiveté and lack of understanding of the past, and this will lead to unwise political moves, which will threaten the European peace and integrity.

European countries need to work together on this matter, and we need to carry on the memory of these large-scale crimes.

Ministry of Justice of Estonia

Ministry of Justice of Latvia

Ministry of Justice of Lithuania

Ministry of Justice of Poland

Ministry of Justice of Romania