

» REMEMBERING – MEETING – EDUCATION «

DRESDNER Declaration

We, members of various nations and religions and of different origins, met in Dresden at an international colloquium on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Dresden during World War II.

Our meeting recalled the occupation of Europe by Germans, the war, its destruction and the extermination of man by man, guided by the NS ideology.

We commemorated all victims of National Socialism.

We are concerned about antisemitism, racism, xenophobia and nationalism and the growing acceptance of these attitudes by the public in various countries.

We thought about how to plan a joint future.

This gathering was possible because - 60 years after the liberation from National Socialism - former victims of persecution, nationals of countries occupied by Germany at that time and descendants of the perpetrators take joint responsibility for peace, democracy, human and civil rights and social development. We witness this meeting as a conscious step on the way to a largely united Europe.

REMEMBERING means to us

We remember the National Socialist genocide and the atrocities of World War II.

Remembering the victims can't be separated from remembering the perpetrators.

We recall what racism, antisemitism, nationalism and right-wing extremism mean and where they are rooted.

We remember the people in the resistance who followed their conscience.

Remembering has a personal and a political dimension. It takes place in the family, among friends as well as at school and it forms part of a social debate. It is based on truthfulness, access to historical facts and productive discussion on different points of view.

Especially today, collective remembrance must be protected from distortion and instrumentalisation by extreme right-wing ideologies.

Coming generations shall never forget which decisions their ancestors made and what their ancestors went through. They shall also remember the joint history and the creative phases of a peaceful living together of their peoples.

MEETING means to us

We exchange experience between the generations and we talk with people from different countries and with different memories.

We understand that people are different but have similar needs and wishes at the same time. Here, the meeting of young people from different countries and religions is especially important.

Together with international partners we develop joint points of view to combat racism, antisemitism, nationalism and right-wing extremism.

It is important to feel that we are not alone.



LEARNING means to us

We go into the causes of racism and war, we develop counter-strategies and we encourage democratic and resistant actions.

We understand that all people have the same rights and duties and that peace requires also the just distribution of resources.

Personal meetings and their reflection help to overcome prejudices and stereotypes and to assess one's own positions critically.

We experience that our personal decisions affect the history and we mistrust ideologies.

That's why we ...

... support an International Network for remembrance and meeting. This includes:

- further development of town twinning, for instance with the Polish city of Wielun with the destruction of which by the German air force World War II began
- meetings of teachers and educationalists, for instance a workshop of Polish, Czech and German teachers in Dresden on

the subject of memorial culture in October 2005.

- international school twinning, for instance between a grammar school in Ostrava and Dresden
- international meetings, for instance an international youth meeting "Future needs remembrance" on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation from National Socialism in summer 2005
- international voluntary services, for instance a more intensive exchange of volunteers between Dresden and the twin-towns
- development of activating access to remembrance and meeting, for instance »Active Museum«, books, films, new media and safeguarding of the reports of contemporary witnesses
- cross-country actions and campaigns against antisemitism, racism and right-wing extremism, for instance on national and international days of remembrance on the occasion of the end of World War II, the liberation of the concentration camps and the international day of action against racism.

That's why we appeal to ...

... the city of Dresden and its twin-towns, particularly Coventry, Ostrava, Rotterdam and St. Petersburg, the twin-associations, organisations and initiatives to work together more intensively,

... the city of Dresden, the twin-towns and all other political levels in the countries concerned to give any material support needed for this,

... organising a follow-up colloquium on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the city of Dresden where the results of the work on the International Network for Remembrance and Meeting shall be publicly presented and further steps be agreed.

We demand ...

under the impression of the Nazis from the whole of Germany demonstrating on 13 February 2005 in Dresden

- the committed civil resistance of all citizens
- the recognition and sustained material support of all democratic initiatives and civil-social structures as well as the research of causes and development of counter-strategies
- a persistent dissociation of all democratic parties and organisations from extreme right-wing positions
- the exhaustion of all democratic and legal means by politicians and authorities to prevent any extreme right-wing and racist activities

Dresden, 14.02.2005

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