



Romanian
Chairmanship
2016

**The message delivered by amb. Mihnea Constantinescu, IHRA Chair, at the Center Sefarad –
Israel in Madrid
on the occasion of
the Seminar dedicated to the Spanish and Romanian diplomats contributors to the Jews rescue
during World War II
Madrid, June 2, 2016**

I have the honour to be in Spain as IHRA Chair, a mandate that Romania exercises from March 2016 to March 2017.

IHRA is an intergovernmental organisation which consists of 31 member-states, 11 observer states and 7 international partners. Both Spain and Romania are full members of this international body. The activity of the organization is built around the principles of the 1998 *Stockholm Declaration* and has three lines of action – Holocaust education, remembrance and research. IHRA's mission is to lend its efforts in ensuring an accurate research of the Holocaust, a suitable Holocaust education for younger generations and an honourable and dignified remembrance of its victims.

The special feature of this organization is the cooperation between diplomats and experts, the decisions that are taken during the IHRA Plenary Meetings being based on a well-documented work of experts. An example in this sense is the most recent IHRA Plenary, which took place in Bucharest last week, when a working definition of the Antisemitism was adopted.

I would like to take advantage of my presence here and thank the Spanish delegation for supporting this decision in Bucharest, whose important outcome is highly important for the experts. The working definition's purpose is to guide the experts of this organisation in their work and to illustrate possible manifestations of Antisemitism. I want to thank again the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commerce in constantly supporting IHRA activities in this country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The exhibition that we are inaugurating today is based on the academic research of the archives, an activity that is central for IHRA.

The particularity of this exhibition is bringing on the same page the activity of two diplomats that should be a model to follow by all of us – the Romanian Constantin Karadja and the Spanish José de Rojas y Moreno.

The two diplomats contributed to saving Jews during the frightful Holocaust time – one in Bucharest (the Spanish representative) and the other one in Berlin (the Romanian representative). Irrespective of the

place where they were, the circumstances under which they acted, the two diplomats risked their lives so that other people have a chance to life.

We honour today two diplomats that wrote their name and their countries' name in the *book of honour* of those who defied terror and hatred for the benefit of humanity and its values. Their courage will always be a source of inspiration for the mission of diplomacy in the service of humanity.

Dear Minister Ruiz-Gallardón Jiménez,

I am glad to have you here today and I am glad to see that the descendants of the saviours of the Jews continue the story of these people. I am deeply grateful and thank you for this impressive lesson for life and the legacy of your great-grandfather, José de Rojas y Moreno, for the future generations.

It is our duty to learn from the lessons of the past and to look responsibility towards the future. We need to teach the new generations that we need to exhaust all possibilities in not allowing the repetition of the mistakes of the past. Let's not stop in telling the young people the truth about our history so that the young people cannot lose courage in front of the history.

I would like to thank Mr. Miguel de Luca, the Director of the *Sefarad-Israel House*. When entering for the first time in this House we find here familiar images about the life of the Sefarad community. Allow me to confess that through its prestige and symbolism the *Sefarad-Israel House* is the *House* of all of us.

Thank you!