

STATEMENT OF THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
FOR COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE
ALLIANCE

Ljubljana, 9 May 2017

The delegation of the Republic of Slovenia to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) wishes to communicate to the public that in late April several media broadcast a TV interview *Sreda v sredo* featuring Mr Bernard Brščič, who, among other things, clearly denied the Holocaust in the following statement: "The German nation is a victim of Jewish imposition and brain burning with so-called holocaustology. I really wonder what my generation of Germans has to do with this mark of Cain of genocide – presumably – namely the Holocaust. In fact, this is a perfidious Jewish design to restrain the German mind, instil collective guilt and devise a plan of de-Germanisation, de-Frenchisation and de-Britishisation. And create a multiculti dystopia."

The members of the Slovenian permanent delegation for cooperation with the IHRA strongly condemn any denial, disparaging or mockery of the Holocaust, which is prohibited by Article 297 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Slovenia. We believe such statements to be an urgent warning that in Slovenia, the study of, awareness-raising about, and education on, the Holocaust need to be significantly enhanced. Taking into account its elaborate nature and industrial execution, no other genocide in history is comparable to the Holocaust. It is urgent to raise awareness that almost 90 per cent of Slovenian Jews perished in the Holocaust and that the Nazi genocide explicitly targeted Slavic populations on the borders of German-speaking territories, especially Slovenes and Poles.

We also wish to express solidarity with, and support for, Mr Robert Walzl who was the first to respond publicly to Mr Brščič's statement. Robert Walzl is a tireless Slovenian cultural worker of national and international renown, and the programme director of the traditional Festival of Tolerance organised by the Jewish Cultural Centre in Ljubljana. The festival plays a key role in raising awareness and improving knowledge about the Holocaust and its consequences. We condemn in the strongest terms the vicious homophobic personal attacks on him and the racist deprecation of his rich cultural work and awareness-raising activity.

The world and Europe, including Slovenia, are witnessing a growing number of cases of Holocaust denial, as well as the resurgence of anti-Semitism, some violent, which go hand in hand with right-wing populist nationalism, different forms of racism and hideous xenophobia. We call upon the media, workers at all levels of education, cultural workers and the public in general to actively counter all types of excessive behaviour, propaganda, falsifications and revisions of history, and dehumanising manipulation.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance is active in the field of remembrance, marking and study of the Holocaust at the national and international levels. The Alliance brings together 31 member countries, 11 observer countries and seven permanent international partners. Slovenia has been a member of the IHRA since 2011.

The permanent delegation of the Republic of Slovenia for cooperation with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance:

- Božena Forštnarič Boroje, Head of Human Rights Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, head of the permanent delegation;
- Ambassador Blanka Jamnišek, Human Rights Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, deputy head of the permanent delegation;
- Aljuš Pertinač, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, member of the permanent delegation;
- Vojko Kunaver, National Education Institute, member of the permanent delegation;
- Nada Zoran, Directorate for cultural heritage, Ministry of Culture, member of the permanent delegation;
- Marjetka Bedrač, Centre of Jewish Cultural Heritage, Sinagoga Maribor, Acting Director, member of the permanent delegation;
- Dr Oto Luthar, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Director, member of the permanent delegation;
- Dr Irena Šumi, Institute for Multicultural and Jewish Studies, Alma Mater Europaea – European Centre Maribor, Head, member of the permanent delegation;
- Dr Kaja Širok, Museum of Contemporary History, Director, member of the permanent delegation;
- Dr Vera Klopčič, Institute of Contemporary History, member of the permanent delegation;
- Renato Podbersič, Study Centre for National Reconciliation, member of the permanent delegation;
- Dr Alenka Janko Spreizer, University of Primorska, member of the permanent delegation;
- Matjaž Špat, Slovenian Association of World War II Veterans – Coordination of Camp Committees Ravensbruck, Auschwitz, member of the permanent delegation;
- Beata Lazar, Gallery-Museum Lendava, Director, member of the permanent delegation