

**Statement by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland on behalf of the Member States of the
European Union**

By

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Affairs**

Holocaust Remembrance

General Assembly

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I have the honour also to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

It is sixty years since the end of the Holocaust, one of the darkest chapters in Europe's history – encompassing the attempt to exterminate the Jews in Europe and the systematic massacre of other groups. Time has passed, but the painful memories have not and cannot be allowed to fade. In January, the European Union fully supported the Session of the United Nations General Assembly which was held to commemorate the liberation of the Nazi death camps. And throughout the European Union, from our veterans to our school children, we have remembered the victims and the survivors: the millions of Jews who were murdered; and the others who were also singled out: the Roma; the physically and mentally disabled; the homosexuals; the political prisoners and the prisoners of war.

Today the international community is firmly resolved that future generations cannot be allowed to forget. The first challenge is to ensure that the Holocaust victims are properly commemorated. And this is why the EU supports a UN resolution to establish an annual day in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. It builds on the commitment that EU member states, and many others, made in 2000 at the Stockholm

International Forum on the Holocaust to commemorate the victims and to honour those who stood against it. And it also builds on the Council of Europe's dedication in 2002 of an annual "Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the prevention of crimes against humanity".

It is equally important that we draw lessons from the Holocaust. An International Day of Commemoration would also provide the opportunity to reflect regularly on how the international community is living up to its pledge of 'never again'. The International Community must do all it can to prevent future acts of genocide. A Holocaust survivor, Rafael Lemkin, was a principal inspiration of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. But tragically, the world still suffers from the evils of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Failure to prevent these crimes reflects a failure to learn from the horrors of the Holocaust.

We ignore history at our peril. The EU therefore supports the aim of the resolution to foster ways of promoting Holocaust education. The Holocaust should be an integral part of national education curricula. Communities and NGOs should play their part too. There is no single blueprint for this, nor should there be. But the contribution to tolerance made by teaching and learning about the Holocaust is clear. The Task Force for International Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, to which many EU member states belong, is a particularly effective way of ensuring high standards in the way we teach about the Holocaust in our schools, universities and communities. We also support the draft resolution's request for the Secretary-General to establish a programme of outreach on the "Holocaust and the United Nations" and to mobilise

civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education.

The significance of the Holocaust is universal. But it commands a place of special significance in European remembrance. It is in Europe that the Holocaust took place. And, like the United Nations, it is out of that dark episode that a new Europe was born. European Union member states work together to promote peace and democracy within its borders and beyond. This is something which we could not have imagined 60 years ago. Yet some members of our societies still face intolerance and prejudice. The best tribute we can pay to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust is to speak out against such attitudes in our own communities. We all still have lessons to learn and we therefore fully support the resolution.