

*Permanent Mission of Romania  
to the United Nations  
New York*



*Mission permanente de la Roumanie  
auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies  
New York*

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## **S t a t e m e n t**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania**

**40<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly**

**- Holocaust Remembrance -**

**New York, 31 October 2005**

**Mr. President,**

Romania joins and fully supports the statement delivered earlier on by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

I wished to take the floor in my national capacity, as Romania has known directly the Holocaust, and has recently taken, on the other hand, a series of steps to assume and come to term with its own past.

**Mr. President,**

I am proud to be able to put on record in this forum the progress Romania was able to achieve, after the obliterating experience of Communism, in regaining its whole historic memory, with both the good and glorious, and the painful chapters. We learned to accept and live with the latter.

The Holocaust, born out of a perverted philosophy of hatred, which later on became a doctrine of death, symbolizes for us the greatest tragedy humankind has ever known. First and foremost, we need to remember and pay homage to those perished in the Holocaust. We need not to forget, for if you do, we may not be able to act effectively upon our collective duty to prevent and make sure such horrors will never again happen.

Romania's position on the Holocaust is firm, clear and committed. Romania has assumed a strong political commitment to develop Holocaust research programs, education in the spirit of promoting democracy, tolerance, combating anti-Semitism, conservation of Jewish cultural heritage and commemoration of the victims of this tragedy.

A notable step in this regard was the setting up of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, chaired by Nobel laureate, Professor Ellie Wiesel. The Commission issued at the end of 2004 a report on the Holocaust in Romania, a true landmark for future studies and public debate on the Holocaust, and provided a set of recommendations that the Romanian Government has endorsed. This is remarkable progress in the country's efforts to assume its past, including the areas of shade.

My Government is committed to fully observe the recommendations of the Commission and to ensure the proper follow-up to its work. A National Commemoration Day of the Holocaust on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October has been decided. That was the day when deportations of Romanian Jews to Transnistria commenced, back in 1941. This year we have observed, for the second time, the Holocaust Day in Romania.

At the same time, as part of its comprehensive approach to fighting anti-Semitism, the Romanian Government issued Government Emergency Ordinance no.31 (March 2002) making unlawful organizations and symbols of a fascist, racist, or xenophobic character, and the promotion of the cult of persons guilty of crimes against peace and humanity.

A National Institute for Holocaust Studies in Romania has been set up at the beginning of this month. This institution will be in charge with the gathering and publication of documents on the Romanian Holocaust, and also with the promotion of educational activities on Holocaust.

We can never dwell enough on the role of education and educational programs in preventing anti-Semitic acts and other forms of intolerance that, during the Second World War, led eventually to the Holocaust.

We have a moral duty to strive harder to make future generations understand the dangers of systematic crimes against peoples and turn the lessons of the past into means to prevent discriminatory action from ever happening again. An undergraduate level textbook on "Jewish History – The Holocaust" was presented at the beginning of this month. It is structured in accordance with the recommendations of the Wiesel Commission, and will be introduced in the educational system to ensure the proper knowledge of Holocaust among Romanian students.

A new Center for Hebrew Studies was inaugurated in Iasi and was included in the national network of similar educational institutions that function in Bucharest, Craiova and Cluj-Napoca and now in Iasi.

In December 2004, Romania became a full member of the *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research*, an organization that coordinates the efforts of its members for a better understanding of the Holocaust by promoting educational programs on this issue, commemoration of the victims as well as research programs. In this position, we are fully determined to play a more active role and initiate projects in cooperation with other member states or liaison countries, including at regional level.

**Mr. President,**

Setting up an annual Holocaust Remembrance Day, in the memory of the victims, is a way to ensure that future generations will not forget the tragedy that occurred in 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe. And this is also why, together with its European partners, Romania supports the UN resolution to establish such a day.

I am persuaded that the step that will be taken today will be of crucial importance for the constant remembrance and commemoration of the worst humankind tragedy. I am honored to be a part of this day at the General Assembly.

**Thank you.**