



Plenary sitting

B9-0098/2019

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission
pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the 80th anniversary of the start of the Second World War and the
importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe
(2019/2819(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on the 80th anniversary of the start of the Second World War and the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe (2019/2819(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260 (III) A of 9 December 1948 on genocide,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 May 2005 on the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe on 8 May 1945¹,
- having regard to Resolution 1481 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of 25 January 2006 on the need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes,
- having regard to the resolutions and declarations on the crimes of totalitarian communist regimes adopted by a number of national parliaments,
- having regard to its declaration of 23 September 2008 on the proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism²,
- having regard to the Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism adopted on 3 June 2008,
- having regard to its resolution of 2 April 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism³,
- having regard to the joint statement of 23 August 2018 of the government representatives of the EU Member States to commemorate the victims of communism,
- having regard to the Commission report of 22 December 2010 on the memory of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe (COM(2010)0783),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 9 and 10 June 2011 on the memory of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe,
- having regard to the Warsaw Declaration of 23 August 2011 on the occasion of the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes,
- having regard to the joint statement by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania on the occasion of 80 years since the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact,

¹ OJ C 92 E, 20.4.2006, p. 392.

² OJ C 8 E, 14.1.2010, p. 57.

³ OJ C 137 E, 27.5.2010, p. 25.

- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 80 years ago on 23 August 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed a Treaty of Non-Aggression, known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and its secret protocols, dividing Europe and the territories of independent states between the two totalitarian regimes and grouping them into spheres of interest, which paved the way for the outbreak of the Second World War;
- B. whereas this year marks the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, which led to unprecedented levels of human suffering and doomed half of Europe to decades of misery and occupation;
- C. whereas, as a direct consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, followed by the Nazi-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty of 28 September 1939, the Polish Republic was invaded first by Hitler and two weeks later by Stalin – which stripped the country of its independence and was an unprecedented tragedy for the Polish people – the communist Soviet Union started an aggressive war against Finland on 30 November 1939, and in June 1940 it occupied and annexed parts of Romania – territories that were never returned – and annexed the independent republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia;
- D. whereas the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact directly violated a number of international norms, treaties and agreements – including the 1928 Paris Treaty, the 1932 Non-Aggression Treaty between Poland and the USSR, and the 1934 Declaration of Non-Aggression between Poland and Germany – and condemned the international peace established by the Versailles Treaty to failure; whereas the consequences of this treaty between two of the most brutal dictators in modern history demonstrates the importance of historical events for contemporary politics;
- E. whereas the West’s desire to appease totalitarian regimes meant that decisions were taken without consulting the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as was the case in Locarno and Munich, which demonstrated the weakness of the West in the face of these regimes; whereas this paved the way for the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, which in turn led to the outbreak of the Second World War;
- F. whereas Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union cooperated politically, economically and militarily with the common goal of conquering Europe and dividing it into spheres of influence, as envisaged in the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact;
- G. whereas after the defeat of the Nazi regime and the end of the Second World War, some European countries were able to rebuild and embark on a process of reconciliation, while other European countries, as a direct consequence of the Yalta Treaty, remained under Soviet occupation and communist dictatorships for half a century and continued to be deprived of freedom, sovereignty, dignity, human rights and socio-economic development;
- H. whereas although the crimes of the Nazi regime were evaluated and punished by means of the Nuremberg trials, there is still an urgent need to raise awareness and carry out moral and legal assessments of the crimes of communist dictatorships; whereas the crimes committed on a scale never before seen in history against millions of human

beings by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, which saw many people enslaved and denied their basic and inalienable rights, qualify as war crimes and crimes against humanity;

- I. whereas Europe must not forget its own history; whereas a comprehensive understanding of Europe's history needs to be facilitated and is paramount in preventing the rise of totalitarianism regimes;
- J. whereas in some Member States, communist and Nazi ideologies are prohibited by law;
- K. whereas the international community must stand together against totalitarianism;
- L. whereas for the European countries that suffered under Soviet occupation and communist dictatorships, the enlargement of NATO after 1999 and those of the EU since 2004 signify their return to the family of Western democratic states to which they belong;
- M. whereas 20th Century European history is primarily written and portrayed from a Western point of view and therefore certain historical events and related experiences of people in Eastern Europe remain underreported;
- N. whereas ignorance and unconscious bias in the historical memory of Europeans may create room for extremism on both the far right and the far left; whereas there is a need for effective opposition to the falsification of history;
- O. whereas remembering the victims of totalitarian regimes and recognising and raising awareness of the shared European legacy of crimes committed by communist, Nazi and other dictatorships is of vital importance for the unity of Europe and its people and for building European resilience to modern external threats;
- P. whereas it is also of the utmost importance to celebrate the testimony and steadfast attitude of the many people who opposed this oppression, such as Rotamaster Witold Pilecki, who actively fought against both totalitarian regimes, voluntarily entering the Nazi German death camp in Auschwitz only to be executed by the Soviets in 1948;
- Q. whereas in its historic resolution on the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania⁴ adopted on 13 January 1983 in reaction to the 'Baltic Appeal' of 45 nationals from these countries, the European Parliament condemned the fact that these formerly independent and neutral states had been occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940 after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and were not liberated until many years later;
- R. whereas 30 years ago, on 23 August 1989, the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was marked and the victims of totalitarian regimes remembered during the Baltic Way, an unprecedented demonstration by two million Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians who joined hands to form a living chain spanning from Vilnius to Tallinn through Riga;

⁴ OJ C 42, 14.2.1983, p. 77.

- S. whereas despite the fact that on 24 December 1989 the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR condemned the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in addition to other agreements made with Nazi Germany the Russian authorities denied responsibility for this agreement and its consequences in August 2019 and are currently promoting the view that Poland, the Baltic States and the West are the true instigators of WWII;
- T. whereas the Government of Russia is now not only not condemning the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, but is actively re-establishing it as a means of defending the nation against aggressors, and is thus by extension rewriting history and exonerating the perpetrators of the associated crimes;
- U. whereas it has become commonplace for Russia to deny responsibility and blame hostilities on the West in its official rhetoric, creating a reliable propaganda base upon which it can rely to justify its disregard of international law and continue its aggression against Eastern Partnership countries;
1. Stresses that the Second World War, the most devastating war in Europe's history, was caused by the notorious Nazi-Soviet Treaty of Non-Aggression of 23 August 1939, also called the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and its secret protocols, which allowed two totalitarian regimes that shared the goal of world conquest to divide Europe into two zones of influence;
 2. Recalls that the Nazi and communist regimes carried out mass murders, genocide and deportations and caused an unprecedented loss of life and freedom, and recalls the horrific crime of the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazi regime;
 3. Regrets that genocides such as the Holocaust, massive crimes against humanity and large-scale violations of human rights such as mass deportations from the Baltic States, Poland and other countries, mass executions such as the Katyn Forest massacre of Polish officers and the massacre of Latvian army officers in Litene, the creation and operation of concentration camps and the Gulag, the man-made famine in Ukraine, the denial of the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, speech and movement, and the many others crimes committed under totalitarian communism have been neither properly investigated nor internationally assessed;
 4. Expresses its deep respect for each victim of these totalitarian regimes and calls on all EU institutions and actors to do their utmost to ensure that horrific totalitarian crimes against humanity and systemic gross human rights violations are remembered and brought before courts of law, and to guarantee that such crimes will never be repeated and that the pain and injustice felt by the victims will never be forgotten;
 5. Considers that remembering and commemorating past horrors gives us the knowledge and strength to stand up to those who seek to revive these ideologies and those who seek to exonerate these ideological groups of their crimes and culpability; believes that remembering victims compels us to promote historical justice by continuing research into and raising public awareness of the totalitarian legacy of the European continent;
 6. Calls upon the governments of all European countries to provide both moral and material support to the ongoing historical investigation into totalitarian regimes, as only by acting in a concerted manner can we more effectively counter disinformation

- campaigns and attempts to manipulate historical facts;
7. Condemns in the strongest terms the acts of aggression, crimes against humanity and mass human rights violations perpetrated by the totalitarian Nazi and communist regimes;
 8. Expresses concern over the rise of extremist far-right and far-left movements in the EU Member States;
 9. Reminds all Member States to commemorate 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism at both EU and national level, and to raise the younger generation's awareness of these issues by including the history and analysis of the consequences of totalitarian regimes in the curricula and textbooks of all schools in the EU;
 10. Calls, furthermore, for 25 May (the anniversary of the execution of the Auschwitz hero Rotamaster Witold Pilecki) to be established as International Day of Heroes of the Fight against Totalitarianism, which will be an expression of respect and a tribute to all those who, by fighting tyranny, demonstrated their heroism and true love for mankind, and will also provide future generations with a clear example of the correct attitude to take in the face of the threat of totalitarian enslavement;
 11. Calls on the Commission to provide effective support for projects of historic memory and remembrance in the Member States and for the activities of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, and to allocate adequate financial resources under the 'Europe for Citizens' programme to support commemoration and remembrance of the victims of totalitarianism; stresses that future generations should have access to factual educational materials which emphasise the dire consequences of passivity in the face of serious violations of international laws and norms;
 12. Points out that while the Eastern and Central European countries returned to the European family of free democratic countries with their accession to the EU and NATO, the European peace and integration project will not be complete until all European countries that have chosen the path of European reforms, such as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, become full Members of the EU: only then will Europe be whole, free, united and at peace;
 13. Is deeply concerned about the efforts of the current Russian leadership to distort historical facts and whitewash crimes committed by the Soviet totalitarian regime and considers them a dangerous component of the information war waged against democratic Europe that aims to divide Europe, and therefore calls on the Commission to decisively counteract these efforts;
 14. Draws attention to the continued use of symbols of the Soviet regime in the public sphere and for commercial purposes and recalls that a number of European countries have banned the use of both Nazi and communist symbols;
 15. Points out that the crimes committed by the totalitarian communist regime of the USSR cannot be excused or exonerated by its contribution to the defeat of the Nazi regime; stresses at the same time that it is unacceptable for the Russian Federation to adopt

legislation penalising anybody who tries to analyse the events of the Second World War from a new point of view;

16. Notes that the continued existence in public spaces in some Member States of monuments and memorials (parks, squares, streets etc.) glorifying the Soviet army, which occupied these countries , paves the way for the distortion of historical facts about the causes, course and consequences of the Second World War;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Russian Duma and the parliaments of the Eastern Partnership countries.