

**The Address by Markéta Pekarová Adamová,
President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,
On the Occasion of
The Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity
Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,
27th January 2023**

Honorable witnesses, Mr President of the Senate, distinguished members of the diplomatic staff, distinguished guests, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

On this important day, one year later, we are once again meeting in these impressive premises to commemorate the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Thank you very much for your invitation and for the opportunity to speak to you for a short time this year.

The unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust are truly unparalleled in our history. However, the hateful seeds that provided its nourishment and from which it sprouted in all its monstrosity in the 20th century have much deeper origins. They arise from a sense of superiority combined with arrogance, envy, cruelty, and ill will. Basically, it is the Old Testament story of Cain and Abel, which in various variations and proportions has been with mankind since time immemorial, threading its way through the centuries, world cultures and religions. Regrettably, we are witnessing clear manifestations of these extremely negative tendencies even today.

Thankfully, we know other stories. Stories of people who willingly and knowingly stood up to evil and injustice. Stories of people who did the right thing when their basic instinct urged them to do the opposite. So, we meet today to pay tribute together with respect to all those who have managed to preserve their humanity even in the darkest hours of our modern history. To all those who, in the face of adversities difficult to imagine, helped others in need and strove to save them.

On this occasion, it is also worth recalling the words of Václav Havel: *"All important events of the real world - beautiful as well as the monstrous ones - always have their prelude in the realm of words."* Thus, the words really matter. It is therefore necessary to treat them with the utmost responsibility and not to cause fear and frustration in society through public statements. These have never led (and will never lead) to any good.

Finally, we meet today to express our moral support for those who, through their systematic work, have long helped to prevent crimes against humanity and have worked against the loss of our historical memory.

Last November, on the anniversary of the so-called Kristallnacht, I personally visited the site of the former Nazi extermination camp in Auschwitz, Poland. It was an extremely moving experience for me. Over there, I recalled the memorable words of Czech writer Arnošt Lustig. In one of his interviews, he said that a person who was imprisoned in Auschwitz and who - by

chance or perhaps by luck - got out, will carry Auschwitz with him for the rest of his life and will never get rid of it. One of these people is Mrs. Dita Krausová, who is present here today and whose eyewitness testimony helps to preserve historical memory for future generations. Thank you for that, Mrs Krausová.

My sincere thanks also go to the members of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, headed by its chairman, Mr. Petr Papoušek. I thank you all for your attention and wish you all the best.