

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL BOARD OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF
GREECE Mr. DAVID SALTIEL**

**IHRA MAIN EVENT IN TRIKALA - SATURDAY 10.11.2018 – 19:00 hours
Ath. Trigonis Cultural Center (8, Garibaldi str.)**

*Your Excellencies Ambassadors,
Messrs. Members of the Hellenic Parliament,
Mr. Mayor,
Messrs. Prefectural and Municipal Councilors
Mr. President of the Hellenic Delegation to the IHRA and Dear Members of
the Delegation,
Mr. President of the Jewish Museum of Greece,
Messrs. Presidents and Representatives of the Jewish Communities of
Greece,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,*

On behalf of the Greek Jewry, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you at the event of tonight, which marks officially the activities assumed on the occasion of this year's Italian Presidency of the IHRA. We are proud to participate in such **a multidimensional program, full of symbolisms, here in Trikala.**

It is multidimensional because the combination of cultural, historical, literary and educational activities constitutes the best way not only to speak about the Holocaust of 6 million Jews, but to impart knowledge and expose the absolute evil, for what this was and to realize that it happened to people like ourselves, because people like ourselves did not react either on time or decisively against fanaticism and against the first signs of hate dissemination.

Additionally, these activities are plenty of symbolism as they present the ties existing between the beautiful city of Trikala and the Jewish population and reveal the strength these ties have. Trikala - together with Larisa and Volos - had one of the lowest rates of Jewish casualties in Greece, due to the fact that Italian occupation and the forces of Resistance created a security zone around the Jewish population of Thessalia.

The **cycle of symbolisms** and messages will be completed at the Holocaust Memorial, which will be unveiled tomorrow. This monument is dedicated by the city of Trikala to their children who perished so cruelly during German occupation.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

we must assume the clout of responsibility and we have to act in order to **impede mankind from falling again into the abysm of obscurantism.**

The alarm bell has sound long time ago: It has sound in Paris, in Brussels, in Copenhagen, in Lyon, in Toulouse and few days ago in Pittsburgh, in the United States.

Rose Malinger was 97 - full of desire for life - when in an autumnal Saturday morning she dressed up, combed her snow-white hair and went to Pittsburgh's Synagogue to pray, as she did every Saturday ... till a fanatic neo-Nazi decided that "all Jews must die". The hatred bullets shot Rose along with 10 more congregants, who never returned home from that Shabbat service...

It was a Saturday, exactly like today...

That is why today, more than ever in history, we have to react against all those worrying signs which are even more intense.

This is the reason why activities for Remembrance and Culture, like the ones IHRA auspices in Trikala, give to all of us the strength to go on with our assignments.

This is the reason why landmark projects, like the Holocaust Monument in Trikala and the restoration of the historic Synagogue of Trikala are the most important response to the malicious intentions of the anti-Semites and the Holocaust deniers.

From this floor, I wish to officially thank the Federal Republic of Germany for the determining contribution to the restoration of the Synagogue of Trikala with the generous grant of 200.000 euros.

I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart the co-organizers of these activities, as through the power of their initiatives they declare their strong stance in our struggle against Anti-Semitism.

I would like to specially thank the Ambassador of Italy in Greece, H.E. Luigi Marras, who in the framework of this year's Italian Presidency of the IHRA, has put together Culture and Antiracist messages and accepted our proposal to conduct the events in Trikala.

I warmly thank the Head of the Greek delegation to the IHRA Dr. Efstathios Lianos-Liantis for the enthusiasm by which he warmly promotes the active role of our country in programs of preserving the Memory of the Holocaust.

Many thanks go to the Mayor of Trikala Mr. Dimitris Papastergiou, to the Vice-mayor for Cultural Affairs Ms. Sophia Alesta and to the Municipal Council not

only for their cordial hospitality, but also for their unreserved support and initiative to build the Holocaust Memorial and for the spirit of brotherhood and cooperation existing with the local Jewish Community.

I would like to thank the Jewish Community of Trikala and its president Mr. Jacob Venouziou and congratulate them as they preserve a Community which, although small, stands as an example of a vivid cell in the fabric of society in the city of Trikala.

Very special thanks go to the Jewish Museum of Greece, to its President Mr. Makis Matsas and to its Director Ms. Zanet Battinou for the presence of the Museum in these events and for the exhibition concerning the Holocaust of the Greek Jewry, inaugurated yesterday. I invite everyone to visit it!

I especially invite young people and students from the area, because education and historical knowledge about the Holocaust of the Greek Jewry is our unique buckler against the populist preaching of hate, that becomes simultaneously our fundamental leader toward a better future.

Concluding, I would like to ask all sectors - institutional and social, national and international - to line up **TOGETHER** and **ALLIED against** extreme ideologies that isolate people from being human, threaten our democracy and disturb our social serenity. We must declare **TOGETHER** and **ALLIED** that we are the guardians of the **MEMORY** and that we will never allow fanaticism, Anti-Semitism and racism to rear its head again.

Thank you.

David Saltiel

Trikala, 10.11.2018