

The Estonian and German Heads of State, Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Joachim Gauck, today held a discussion on the topic "What will we remember in the future?" at the Museum of Occupations.

"We want to know what happened and how," told President Ilves, who initiated the establishment of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory in 2008 to historically investigate the situation of human rights and the violation of human rights that took place in Estonia during the Soviet regime. "We want to relieve people of the burden of silence. Verbalising memories will be a release."

According to President Gauck, who is in Estonia on a state visit, the re-unified Germany chose "the policy of open eyes and open files", though in Estonia it was not possible to investigate many important archives that provide an overview of the Soviet occupation, as these are kept in Russia.

After the discussion, Presidents Ilves and Gauck made a joint declaration to express their approval of the closer co-operation between the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship (Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur) and the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory.

"Today's discussion about the influence of communist dictatorship on the development of our societies demonstrates the need to continue the extensive and in-depth analysis of the era concerned, particularly from the perspective of a discussion on democratic European values," stated the two heads of state. "This is why we are pleased that the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship and the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory are willing to discuss and study this subject in depth in the future."

First of all, the representatives of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory will be invited to take part in an international symposium of history, "European Remembrance – 2nd International Symposium of European Institutions dealing with 20th Century History", which will be organised by the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship on 10-12 October 2013 in Berlin.

Next, the representatives of the German foundation will come to Estonia with a delegation of historical research institutes in spring-summer 2014 to hold a follow-up symposium in Tallinn with the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory.

This October, within an event that takes place in Berlin, representatives of the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship and the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory will discuss the alternatives for future closer co-operation in the sphere of research and publications, by considering the issues as a part of teaching work at schools and for organising future events.

The Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship (Bundesstiftung für die Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur) was established in April 1998 by the German Bundesdag to "contribute to the sphere of comprehensive re-appraisal of the SED dictatorship in the Soviet occupation zone in Germany and the reasons, history and consequences of the dictatorship in DDR, in co-operation with other establishments, and to support remembering injustice and keeping the memory of victims alive, as well as to promote in society a consentient anti-totalitarianism attitude, democracy and the internal integrity of Germany".

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