

Prezident republiky

Dear Ministers, State Representatives and Experts,

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Dear participants of the Terezín Declaration Conference,

I once declared: *ani yehudi* "I am a Jew". Even then, it was unusual for the president of another country to make such a statement. Today, in times of rising waves of anti-Semitism and hatred in the world, this statement sounds even stronger.

There is a strong historical bond between the Czech and Jewish nations. Therefore, I thank you very much for your participation in the Terezín Declaration Conference, which can move many things forward - whether it is education about Holocaust, the fight against anti-Semitism, or tackling property injustices from the time of the Holocaust. The survivors and those who are no longer here must get their justice one day.

Many young people today do not know the term Holocaust, and sadly: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." It is our task to educate the younger generation as much as possible and in this context I am glad that the initiative during the first Czech Presidency of the EU Council in the form of the Terezín Declaration has materialised including today's conference.

When I watch what is happening in the world today, it seems to me with sadness that the world has not learned enough from the worst genocide in the history of mankind. We all need to use our influence to change the situation. Therefore, I would like to ask you in the words of one old Hebrew text: "Depart from evil, and do good. Seek peace, and pursue it."

I wish you a successful conference.

SHALOM

