**Speech of the Dean of Tallinn Diplomatic Corps**

*Commemoration of June Deportations and the Day of Mourning, 14 June 2024, Tallinn*

Your Excellency Mr Speaker, honourable Members of Parliament, excellencies, dear friends,

* It is a great honour for me to address you on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps on the occasion of the Day of Mourning
* Today, we have gathered at Maarjamäe to commemorate the tragic events of 14 June 1941, when over 10,000 people were forcibly deported from Estonia under its occupation by the USSR
* And as every year, more names of those who lost their homes and lives are carved into the black walls of Maarjamäe Memorial. It is of paramount importance that institutions cherishing our historical memory, such as Memento Union, keep documenting the crimes and atrocities committed by the communist regime.
* We diplomats have at least one thing in common with the historians: we often analyze the past and try to draw lessons for the future. And while historians mainly ask themselves the question: could the tragedies of the past have been averted?, we diplomats, look for parallels with contemporary world, and ask: What course of action do we need take to avoid past failures?
* Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were occupied as the aftermath of an infamous Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact, concluded in secrecy between two evil powers: Nazi Germany and Communist Soviet Union
* That was almost two years after my country, democratic, multiethnic Czechoslovakia, was forced to give up part of its territory, in a false hope that it would buy Europe peace. It did not.
* A year later, /my country already was under full occupation/, Nazi Germany and the USSR attacked Poland. Again, many were hoping that this would satisfy the aggressors and they would stop there. They did not. And while Nazi Germany subsequently seized most of Western Europe, the Soviet Union, under the pretext of a friendly assistance, subtly made its way into to the Baltic republics to occupy them in the summer of 1940.
* Hence, my message to those who think that we can trade our core values with the aggressor to buy peace: no, we cannot.
* The playbook used by Nazi Germany and USSR against Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1938 and 1939 is the same as the one used by Russia against Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova. And those who believe that Russia will stop in Donbas, Abkhazia, South Ossetia or Transnistria, are terribly wrong.
* I am grateful that our host country, Estonia, not only commemorates the tragic moments of its history, such as the June deportations. It also draws lessons from them and pursues such policies in the international arena that aim at discrediting aggression as a legitimate tool in international relations, thus standing on the right side of history.
* Elagu Eesti, Slava Ukraini!