



**Speech by Thorbjørn Jagland,
Secretary General of the Council of Europe
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66 years is a long time, but then again, it is not. It is less than a lifetime. If the Holocaust had not happened, if one and a half million children would not have lost their lives in the most horrible circumstances, there would have been a million and a half more grandfathers and grandmothers in Europe, enjoying their retirement, spending time with their grandchildren. But they were murdered. One and a half million children and millions more adults, Jews, Roma, homosexuals, disabled people, political dissidents, religious minorities and others, singled out for their race, religion, political beliefs, or their sexual orientation. Murdered.

Every time I think of what has happened, here, in Europe, I feel like shouting my outrage, yet I am at a loss for words.

Everything has been said about what happened. Everything has been said about how it should not happen again.

I wish to say: enough talking. We must remember, and we must act.

And when we remember, let us think of individual victims. They all had a name, they all had families, hopes and fears, and plans for the future. A future which ended in the death camps and mass graves across our Continent.

And we must act because a cold wind of intolerance, of prejudice and hate is blowing again across Europe. Is there a threat of another Holocaust? Perhaps not. But can we afford to take any risks? I do not think so.

This is why we need to work on creating a social model in which we will not only tolerate each other, but will open up, accept, and respect each other. A Europe where people and communities will live with each other, not only beside each other, or even against each other.

This is not yet the Europe of today, but it must become the Europe of tomorrow. And the Council of Europe will make its contribution.