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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Prime Minister: 70 years after the World War II it is essential to commemorate and to prevent war and totalitarian crimes**

Today, Laimdota Straujuma, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia and representative of Latvia as the EU Presiding country, visited Alsace, France, upon an invitation by the President of France, and participated in a commemorative event at the site of the Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp. Today, April 26, is the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the camp. Other honorary members also included European Council President Donald Tusk, Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjorn Jagland and European Parliament President Martin Schulz. "70 years after the World War II it is essential to commemorate and to prevent war and totalitarian crimes. This is a tragic past event to be remembered in the 21st century, and we should take maximum effort to make sure that it can never happen again," said Laimdota Straujuma.

In the period of 1941-1945, over 50,000 prisoners were enslaved and some 20,000 died at the Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp. People of 30 nationalities were imprisoned in the camp, including 16,000 Polish people, 6,000 French people, 3,700 Germans and 400 Latvians.

On May 8, Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma, invites to a commemorative event in Rīga Il Meža kapi cemetery and further to a commemorative event at Salaspils Memorial Ensemble where she together with the administration of the Memorial will commemorate all those who were imprisoned or tortured in this camp during the World War II. "An objective story is necessary about Salaspils Memorial Ensemble; this is a task of historians. Among the prisoners of Salaspils concentration camp were also Konstantīns Čakste who chaired the Latvian Central Council, and Miervaldis Birse, Latvian writer and physician," said Laimdota Straujuma.

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