

PRESS RELEASE

1939: HITLER, STALIN AND EASTERN EUROPE

An international symposium in Wroclaw from 16 to 20 September 2009

Berlin, 16 September 2009. The Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1939 put the stamp on the final failure of Europe's states to check the German National Socialists by means of a common policy. Stalin's solo action and the unscrupulous dividing up of Eastern Europe between Germany and the Soviet Union left behind many traumatic memories that are still with us today. The international symposium "1939 – Hitler, Stalin and Eastern Europe" is looking not only at the impacts of the Non-Aggression Pact, but above all at the current forms of historical commemoration in Poland, Russia and Ukraine, as well as in the Baltic States, Moldova and Germany.

The event will be opened at the Willy-Brandt Centre in Wroclaw, Poland, by the former President of Latvia, Vike-Freiberga. Eye-witnesses from several countries will then describe their personal memories of the year 1939 and the effects of the Hitler-Stalin Pact on their societies.

Günter Saathoff, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Foundation EVZ, will give a welcome address at the opening. The Foundation EVZ has promoted the five-day meeting. *"If we want to mainstream understanding between peoples in Europe, the peoples must also communicate with each other about their different remembrances of their common past"*, explains Günter Saathoff at the opening in Wroclaw.

The historian Stefan Troebst as Director of GWZO Leipzig has organised the symposium. He too will welcome the some 100 international guests. The forum is also being supported by the Network Remembrance and Solidarity.

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