The BRITISH-LUXEMBOURG SOCIETY
Baroness Hale of Richmond's
Sir Winston Churchill Memorial Lecture 2023
Monday 20th November at 18.00

Venue: St. George's International School, 11 rue des Peupliers, L-2328 Hamm,Luxembourg

Dear Baroness Hale,
Honoured Guests,

I was asked, in my capacity as secretary of the *Fondation nationale de la Résistance* to deliver a short speech tonight. You will indeed wonder what the FONARES has to do with the British-Luxembourg Society. FONARES has been a partner of the *Sir Winston Churchill Memorial Lecture* for many years, to pay tribute to your eminent statesman.

The National Foundation for Resistance regroups the Luxembourg associations whose members - my father had been one of them - had been, during World War II, active in combating Nazi terror. Our chairman has been for the last 10 years the outgoing Prime Minister Xavier BETTEL whom I'd like to thank for his continuous support of our activities. Our new chairman is now Prime Minister Luc FRIEDEN whom many of us also have known for many years.

I'm certainly not going to dare speak on the subject of Baroness Hale of Richmond, but I'd like to expose one of the concerns of FONARES and of many of those keeping alive the souvenir of what happened in Europe in WWII. I'm referring to a working meeting which took place in Paris on November 4 and which brought together delegates from 16 member states of the *Comité International de Mauthausen.* Mauthausen (Austria), was one of the most cruellest concentration camps.

The International Mauthausen Committee was founded in 1944 as a clandestine international resistance movement in the concentration camp. It became the international association of survivors after liberation, in which they have been campaigning since for the defence of human rights, social justice and peace, and continuously recalling to memory the crimes of Nazism. They issued an appeal (quote:)

Resolutely oppose the strengthening of neo-fascist parties in Europe!

The Nazis and their fascist collaborators destroyed Europe and murdered millions of people. All those who did not conform to their inhumane worldview were persecuted, forced into exile or killed. Education and culture that contradicted their ideology were banned, books were burned. To prevent all this from happening again in the future, the survivors of the concentration camps proclaimed the following motto after the liberation from Nazi fascism: ***Never again nazism or fascism*** !

Quote from The Mauthausen Oath of 16 May 1945:

> *"The many years spent in the camp have deepened our understanding of the value of the human brotherhood. Faithful to this ideal, we swear, in solidarity and in common agreement, to continue the struggle against imperialism and national incitement. Just as the world was liberated from the threat of Hitlerian supremacy by the joint effort of*

all peoples, so we must regard this regained freedom as the common good of all peoples.

(...) Having won our own freedom and fought for the freedom of our nations, we want to keep the international solidarity of the camp in our memory and learn the lessons from it." (End of quote)

It is with great concern that we observe in many places and especially in Europe how fascist, nationalist and extreme right-wing movements and parties are gaining strength. They are already represented in many local parliaments and some countries are governed by them. In all of these places, their efforts to erode democracy step by step in view of its destruction, as well as to rob culture and education of their diversity in the service of a supposed national community of values, are clearly recognisable. The history of National Socialism, its path to power and the subsequent swift establishment of a dictatorship is the textbook example of this. History also teaches that those political parties which, out of their own lust for power, enter into coalitions with anti-democratic parties, end up strengthening them and paving the way for the abolition of democracy.

This threatening development must be taken seriously at long last! There is still a chance to stop this progression and choose a different path. United, in solidarity with all those who are committed to democracy, human rights and international solidarity, social justice and peace, we can succeed.

Thank you!

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