recognition of the Nazi crimes and recognition as a national minority in the 1970s and 1980s. It took
four decades until the then German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt recognized the genocide of Sinti and
Roma under international law in 1982. In 2022, the German Federal President Frank-Walter
Steinmeier described this antigypsyism and the continued injustice against Sinti and Roma after 1945
as a "second persecution" and asked Sinti and Roma for forgiveness.
Ladies and gentlemen,
It fills me with great concern when I see the rise of nationalism and right-wing extremism in the world
today. My family and I have had to experience what racist hatred and violence can lead to. I myself
experienced two right-wing extremist attacks on my person and my business in the 1990s.
The legacy of the victims of Auschwitz is an obligation and responsibility for all nations and for the
global community gathered here.
It is not just about protecting minorities such as Sinti and Roma and Jews, it is about the fact that
today - more than ever - we must defend our democracy and the rule of law.
Ladies and gentlemen,
Every year on August 2, we commemorate the last 4,300 Sinti and Roma in the German Nazi
concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, who were murdered by the SS on this night in 1944 despite
fierce resistance. In 2015, the European Parliament declared this day International Holocaust
Memorial Day for Sinti and Roma.
I appeal to all member states of the United Nations to recognize August 2 as International Holocaust
Memorial Day for Sinti and Roma and to commemorate this year's 80th anniversary at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in a dignified manner.
I would like to call on young people around the world in particular to carry the memories of us eye-witnesses and the remembrance into the future. I hope that you will stand up for democracy and
against antigypsyism, antisemitism and all forms of racism with courage and commitment.
Thank you very much