

Institute of National Remembrance

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Deputy President of the IPN Prof. Karol Polejowski visits Bratislava on the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Slovak Nation's Memory Institute (ÚPN).

















At the invitation of the President of the Board of Directors of the Slovak Nation's Memory Institute Jerguš Sivoš, on 23 May 2023, Deputy President of the IPN Prof. Karol Polejowski, as guest of honor, gave a

speech at a gala event held at the Primate's Palace in Bratislava on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Slovak equivalent of the IPN. The Institute of National remembrance views the opportunity for Prof. Karol Polejowski to speak as a token of appreciation for the IPN, which, as the largest institution of this kind in the world, serves as a mentor and model for similar organizations. The multilevel cooperation with our Slovak partner has been successfully carried out for many years and the ÚPN remains one of the Institute's key partners.

We are meeting here today on a very special occasion, which is the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Nation's Memory Institute. It is a special anniversary also for us, as we have a great deal in common with our Slovak brothers. What unites us are the shared past experiences under the communist regime, and after its fall, the joint efforts to research this period, to bring the perpetrators to justice, and to pay tribute to the victims.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when the Polish Parliament established the Institute of National Remembrance in early 1999, we were extremely pleased to discover that one of our most important partners would soon after appear in Slovakia. Although we are now the largest institution of this type in the world, with an extensive secret services archive, and a prosecutorial division, let me say, that for the last two decades our cooperation with your Institute has been one of the most fruitful and best developed, said Prof. Polejowski.

The Slovak Nation's Memory Institute collects, compiles and publishes analyses of crimes against humanity committed during World War II and during the reign of the communist regime in Slovakia. Among the ÚPN's statutory tasks are the promotion of freedom-related ideas and

the defense of democracy against totalitarian regimes. Nation's Memory Institute strongly condemns the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine, preceded by an eight-year-long conflict that began with Russia's seizure of Ukrainian Crimea and parts of Donbass in 2014.

During their stay in Bratislava, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) Prof. Karol Polejowski, the Director of the Office of International Cooperation Agnieszka Jędrzak and the Director of the IPN Historical Research Office Sebastian Pilarski Ph.D., also met with Polish Ambassador Krzysztof Strzałka and the management of the Polish Institute in Bratislava. The talks mostly focused around the topic of future cooperation in the field of publishing, education, research and joint exhibitions . Moreover, the "Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom" project was presented as an example of the implementation of remembrance policy. The opening of both this exhibition and an exhibition prepared by the IPN Historical Research Office and National Remembrance Office on various Polish forms of protest against the armed invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 were discussed and planned. It was agreed that the Freedom Festival, organized by the ÚPN would be a good opportunity to familiarize Slovak audiences with Polish history. The Freedom Festival is an annual event held in the Slovak Republic. It includes lectures, film screenings, discussions, stage performances, theatrical performances and exhibitions. The undertaking focuses on the twentieth-century history of the region and is an event open to the general public.

Issues related to the accountability of those guilty of communist crimes, moral and material reparation to the victims of repression and the preservation of their memory were raised. The representatives of both Institutions declared their willingness to continue cooperation in the historical research and publishing fields, as well as in the joint organization of conferences and popular science meetings. Several times a year, Bratislava hosts discussion evenings on common aspects of recent Polish and Slovak history. It has been suggested that these events be held simultaneously at the Slovak Institute in Warsaw. The exhibitions presented in Slovakia by the Institute of National Remembrance are also very popular.

The visit to Bratislava was organized by the IPN's International Cooperation Office.

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