



EU leader tells Europe's Jews: "I will always be there for you"

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(May 23, 2018) First VP of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, stands by continents community while being awarded the Lord Jakobovits Prize for European Jewry.

A European leader has told the continent's Jewish community "I will always be there for you" as he was awarded the Lord Jakobovits Prize for European Jewry.

Speaking at the Great Synagogue in Brussels, First Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans said: "I will always be there for you, I will always defend your rights and I will always stand by you."

Together with Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament, Timmermans was honoured with one of European Jewry's highest accolades, named after former Chief Rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits.

Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, presented the award to Timmermans, while Rabbi Albert Guigui, Chief Rabbi of Brussels, presented a second award to Tajani. In an emotional address, delivered without notes, Timmermans said: "The souls of so many cities were torn out during the Shoah but the attitude of the Jewish community is the ultimate triumph over Hitler and his henchman. This is our common quest. This is the Europe we want to be a part of."

At the same ceremony, the Rabbi Moshe Rosen Prize was awarded to Lithuanian novelist Ruta Vanagaite, whose novels have challenged her nation's understanding of its treatment of Jews during the war. Last year the prize was awarded for former French president Nicholas Sarkozy. Goldschmidt thanked Timmermans and Tajani for their support for religious freedom in Europe but warned against "the sinister undercurrent [of hate] in society that many of us hoped was consigned to the past".

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