

Welcome given by Insa Eschebach, Ravensbrück Memorial, 16 April 2020

The Ravensbrück Memorial had to cancel the events to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the women's concentration camp because of the coronavirus pandemic.

We expected **40 survivors** with family members and many more guests from all over the world to attend this important anniversary.

We had planned to hold **30 events**: a concert given by an orchestra from Cracow, a reading with former French resistance fighter **Jacqueline Fleury**, new exhibitions to be opened, discussion groups, receptions – and lots of conversations and meetings. Calling all that off because of corona was a difficult decision indeed.

You may ask now, **Why is this 75th anniversary of liberation so important?** Why did so many people from Eastern and Western Europe plan to come to Ravensbrück this April?

Here, in this camp, **120,000 women and children** from more than 30 countries were imprisoned. The prisoners detained here were not to have a place in a Europe under Nazi rule. It was here where “the other Europe” came together.

The process of **European understanding** was in response to the **experience of the Second World War**. Many women interned here became political activists after the war, speaking up for European, international and humanitarian interests and concerns, often across the Iron Curtain. **Their children and grandchildren in Israel, Eastern and Western Europe** remember the fate of their mothers and grandmothers and have fostered relations with the Ravensbrück Memorial, sometimes over many years. We, the German side, are **grateful for their friendship** and the international rapport.

My hope is that all of them, especially also the older ones among them, will get through this pandemic and stay in good health.

My hope is that we will gather here in April 2021 to mark this year's anniversary and meet again as we have always done.