**The Address of Jan Bartošek**

**On the occasion of The Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust**

**And Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity**

**Senate of the Czech Parliament**

 **January 27, 2017**

Dear Holocaust survivors,

Dear President of the Senat of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,

Dear President of the Federation of the Jewish Communities,

Dear President of the Bavarian State Parliament,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me that I was able to come and say a few words at this occasion. A few words, which are meant especially for you, who personally experienced the inhuman conditions and cruelty of Nazi labour and death camps. You **experienced the Holocaust, but first and foremost you survived the Holocaust! You survived the genocide of your nation. You survived the Shoah!**

Let me, therefore, express my deep respect and honour that I hold for you. Respect for many of you who still have so much personal physical, and moral strength and determination to convey your life stories to the young generation and all those willing to listen and to learn. **You have my deep admiration!** Because those, who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. None of us want that to happen! **Nothing like that may ever happen again!**

I am a religious Christian politician. Let me, therefore, borrow a few words of Pope Francis, who spoke almost exactly one year ago in a synagogue in Rome. He emphasized the special nature of the dialogue between Christians and Jews, which stems from the Jewish roots of Christianity! "Christians - said the Holy Father – to be able to understand themselves **cannot refrain from referring to the Jewish roots. The Church** recognizes the **irreversibility of the old covenant and the faithful and steadfast love of God for Israel."**

Providing I have sufficiently well prepared for this day, according to rabbinic tradition – three times repeated act shall become a chazakah. **A firmly established habit!** The third visit of the Pope in a synagogue is therefore **"a concrete sign of a new era, after all that happened in the past."**

We are all responsible with our own share for this world, for not repeating the past!

I wish and I will strive to make the World, Europe, and the Czech Republic a safe place, a place of reconciliation, reverence, and mutual respect. Thank you for your attention!