

Celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Charter of German Expellees

On 5 August the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the declaration of the Charter of German Expellees was held in Stuttgart. The Charter functions as a credo for the Federation of Expellees. The rank of the politicians that participated in the celebration contradicts the opinions that the Federation of Expellees (BdV) is a niche organisation of the displaced that has no impact on German day-to-day politics. The celebration was a token of political support for and solidarity with the circles of expellees.

60 years ago representatives of the expellees declared in the Charter of German Expellees that they would not seek revenge and announced that they would work for the cause of the reconstruction of Germany and Europe. However, the "constitution" of the expellees has been many times criticised for promoting a vision of history in which there is no clear message that Germany was responsible for World War II and its consequences. During the celebration Norbert Lammert (CDU), the President of the Bundestag defended the Charter saying that it is one of the foundation documents of the Federal Republic of Germany. In the opinion of Thomas de Maiziere (CDU), the head of the German Ministry of Internal Affairs, this document remains a continuously updated commitment to work for the cause of a united Europe. The participation in the event of Guido Westerwelle (FDP), the German foreign minister, provided an opportunity for a symbolic ending of the "cold war" with Erika Steinbach and a demonstration of understanding for views held by the electorate gathered around the Federation of Expellees. During the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Charter, Erika Steinbach repeated her demand of making 5 August the national day of remembrance of victims. This is supported by a section of the Christian Democrats.

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