



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon David Lidington MP  
Minister for Europe  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

Our Ref: MM/LOWE01007/01130312

10 March 2016

Dear David,

**Re: SS march in Latvia**

I am writing regarding the correspondence I have received from my constituent, Ms Monica Lowenberg, concerning the attendance of Latvian MPs at a march on 16<sup>th</sup> March to mark the contribution of the Latvian SS Legion who fought alongside the Nazis during World War II.

Six weeks ago we marked Holocaust Memorial Day to remember those killed, and vowed not to stand by as hatred and persecution take root. Almost all of the 70,000 Latvian Jews were murdered during the Holocaust, and it is abhorrent that the pro-SS marches planned for 16<sup>th</sup> March seek to celebrate and glorify the actions of those who fought alongside the Nazis - whether they were forcibly conscripted or enthusiastic volunteers.

Ms Lowenberg has campaigned for a number of years against these pro-SS marches, which in her words seek to "merge myth with memory", insidiously rewriting history to justify the actions of those who seek to spread bitterness, hate and division today.

I understand that the Latvian Government has not allowed Ministers to attend the marches in the last two years, but I am concerned that it has now been reported that this year a significant number of MPs from the All for Latvia!-For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK (VL-TB/LNNK) party intend to participate.

As you know, the VL-TB/LNNK party has one MEP, Robert Zile, who sits in the European Conservatives and Reformists European Parliamentary group, in which Conservative MEPs also sit, and indeed form the largest group.

Particularly given the vows that were made recently as part of Holocaust Memorial Day, I would urge you to publicly condemn this march, and to reconsider the position of Conservative MEPs that share a platform in the European Parliament with an MEP

who represents a party that appears happy to glorify in the actions of Latvian troops that fought alongside the Waffen SS.

I would be grateful if you would advise what representations the Government has made to their Latvian counterparts regarding this march, and the possible participation of a number of Latvian MPs.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gareth Thomas". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Gareth Thomas MP  
Harrow West