



**Federal President Frank Walter Steinmeier
at the lighting of the Hanukkah Menorah at the
Brandenburg Gate
Berlin, 2 December 2018**

I am delighted to have the opportunity to celebrate Hanukkah with you today here at the Brandenburg Gate in the heart of Berlin. Rabbi Teichtal, thank you so much for inviting me!

Hanukkah is a happy, a cheerful occasion celebrated with the family. This year, Advent starts almost at the same time and we Christians are also lighting candles and celebrating with our families - even if this custom is by far not as old. In both our religions, the lights represent joy and they represent trust.

Hanukkah is the victory of light over dark, a victory of hope. According to the teaching, this hope found wonderful fulfilment in the Second Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was to be rededicated after the occupation but there was only one cruse of pure oil to keep the eternal flame of the Menorah burning, enough for just one day. And yet the light burned brightly for eight days until new pure oil was available. That is the miracle of Hanukkah: the seemingly impossible is possible, thwarting all expectations.

The seemingly impossible is possible - this holds true in moments of joy for us today as well. To me, Jewish life in our country is one such joy. Eighty years after Pogromnacht, here in Berlin and all across Germany, after the betrayal of all civilised values that was the Shoah, it is a gift that we can reach out to one another today across the abyss created by our past. Let me assure you that this past constitutes for us an obligation and a responsibility. And it is a past under which no line can and will ever be drawn.

All across Europe and also in Germany, anti-Semitic hate-mongering, anti-Semitic hatred can be heard once more, in speeches, on the streets, in school playgrounds, particularly on the Internet. We must not tolerate this, whether the anti-Semitism be old or new, quiet

or loud. We must and will take a resolute stand, no matter in what guise it appears.

Today, however, we want to take joy from the light, the very light that we are about to let shine. We are grateful that we once more have vibrant Jewish life in Germany and many different, self-confident Jewish communities. And we are grateful that we are again celebrating Hanukkah together in this country.

The light was victorious over the dark. That is the miracle of Hanukkah.

“Nes Gadol Haya Sham – A great miracle happened there.”

“Nes Gadol Haya Po – A great miracle happened here.”

I wish you all a wonderful, a happy and a bright Hanukkah!

Thank you very much indeed.