

Unofficial translation

Wars against Monuments and Memory



Moscow 2026

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Austria	5
Bulgaria.....	5
Hungary.....	5
Ireland	6
Italy	6
Latvia.....	7
Lithuania	9
Malta	11
Moldova	11
The Netherlands	13
Norway.....	13
Poland.....	14
Portugal	15
Ukraine.....	16
France.....	20
FRG	21
Czech Republic	22
Sweden	23
Estonia.....	24
European Union	24

Introduction

22 June 2026 marked the 85th anniversary of Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, which made a decisive contribution to victory in World War II and to the liberation of Europe from Nazism.

Regrettably, a number of European nations are currently making cynical attempts to play down the Soviet people's contribution to the Victory, rewrite the USSR's role in the war, equate Nazism with Communism, and even rehabilitate Nazis and their collaborators.

Clear evidence of this dangerous trend toward rewriting history is the policy pursued by several countries under which restrictions and bans on Victory Day celebrations were imposed. Such restrictions and bans manifest themselves in various ways: from local authorities explicitly refusing to allow 9 May commemorative events and imposing bans or restrictions on traditional holiday symbols to effectively outlawing any collective acts of tribute, such as laying wreaths and flowers at war memorials and graves.

An especially dangerous strain of revisionism is witnessed in the Baltic states, Poland, and Ukraine, where a veritable "war" has been unleashed on Soviet war memorial heritage. Monuments honouring those who gave their lives to liberate Europe from Nazism are being destroyed, only to be "replaced" by memorials glorifying those who put theories of racial superiority into practice. A recent case in point is the ceremonial reburial in Ukraine of the remains of Andrey Melnyk, a nationalist leader who collaborated with Nazi Germany.

In total, this thematic publication includes data on 19 countries and the European Union. The purpose of this document is to shed light on specific countries where restrictions or bans were imposed on 9 May celebrations as well as acts of vandalism were recorded, and monuments to the Soviet soldiers who liberated Europe from the "Brown Plague" were dismantled.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

ON THE "WARS AGAINST MONUMENTS"
AND BANS OR RESTRICTIONS
ON COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

honouring the Victory over Nazi Germany
SINCE 2022

PRESERVING THE MEMORY IS OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

- Paying tribute to the heroic feat of soldiers and war victims
- Holding commemorative events and activities
- Preserving and maintaining war graves and memorials
- Keeping intergenerational continuity
- Preserving unity in remembering the Victory

MAJOR BANS AND RESTRICTIONS

- Bans on holding commemorative events and activities
- Restrictions on permitted dates, formats, and numbers of attendees
- Prohibitions on displaying symbols and insignia
- Dismantling of monuments and memorials
- Prosecution and fines for participating in events or expressing views

CONSEQUENCES OF THE POLICY OF PROHIBITION

- Distortion of history and the revision of World War II outcomes
- Social division and growing intolerance towards dissenting views
- Diminished dialogue and mutual understanding between nations
- Desecration of the memory of millions who perished and those who liberated Europe
- Undermined efforts to maintain peace, stability, and international law

Such actions run counter to the principle of respecting history and the heroic deeds of the nations that liberated the world from Nazism and undermine efforts to preserve the memory of Victory for generations to come.

Austria

Since the beginning of the special military operation official representatives of the Russian Federation, including the ambassador, have not been invited to commemorative events and activities organized by the Austrian authorities.

In 2026, during the "Immortal Regiment" procession, the Austrian side also sanctioned a counter-protest involving Ukrainian activists, representatives of the self-proclaimed "Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in exile" led by Roza Dunayeva, Russian expats, and the "Russians Against War" movement.

In April 2026, unknown vandals defaced the memorial to soldiers who died liberating Austria at the Gersthof district cemetery in Vienna, having covered it in paint.

On 8 May 2026, at Vienna's Central Cemetery, vandals damaged the gravestones of Soviet soldiers who fell in the battles to liberate Austria from Nazism.

Bulgaria

Between 2022 and 2026, two formal obstacles were recorded: in 2023, Sofia City Council refused to permit the "Immortal Regiment" procession through city centre, and in 2024, it banned Victory Day celebrations in front of the mass grave memorial in the Lozenets capital district.

In December 2023, the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia was dismantled under the pretext of urgent "repairs and restoration". At present, the cut elements of the sculptural composition are stored in open air at a state-owned warehouse, with no visible steps taken towards its restoration.

Hungary

The country's current constitution enshrines the narrative of Hungary's "double occupation" (first German, then Soviet) in 1944–1945 and the "loss of state sovereignty" between 1945 and 1989. Hungary pursues a policy that equates National Socialism with Communism.

At the legislative level, the "use of totalitarian symbols with political and propaganda ends" is outlawed. This includes the swastika, SS insignia, the Arrow Cross, as well as the red star and the hammer and sickle (except for those located on Soviet military graves). Denying the crimes of the communist and Nazi regimes, as well as the Holocaust, is a punishable criminal offence.

Ireland

Following the beginning of the special military operation, Russian compatriots residing in Ireland faced significant difficulties in organising commemorative events marking the Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

In particular, the event organizing committee was forced to alter the traditional route for its annual motor rally and the "Immortal Regiment" procession after the management of the Phoenix Park located in Dublin's centre refused to provide a venue in March 2022. In subsequent years, commemorative events were held on the outskirts of or beyond the Irish capital.

Italy

Since the beginning of 2026, isolated acts of vandalism have been recorded, most likely conducted by Ukrainian activists (there is no official confirmation). On 2 February 2026, a monument in Cantalupo Ligure marking the site where Fyodor Poletaev, Hero of the Soviet Union and national hero of Italy, lost his life was vandalised. The wall forming the backdrop to the monument was painted blue and yellow, and the wreaths laid by the Russian Consulate-General in Genoa and local residents were removed.

On 17 May 2026, wreaths laid by the personnel of the Russian Consulate-General in Milan and the Russia-Emilia-Romagna Association were stolen from the memorial in Casalecchio di Reno. The monument commemorates the victims of the Casalecchio massacre of 10 October 1944, who were both Soviet and Italian members of the Resistance movement.

Latvia

The Latvian authorities continue to pursue their policy of falsifying history and rehabilitating former Waffen-SS legionnaires and Nazi collaborators, elevating them to the "national liberation movement". Riga's revisionist policy has taken clear shape since 2022.

On 31 March 2022, the Latvian parliament approved a further set of amendments to the Law on Safety of Public Entertainments and Festive Events, introducing a ban on holding events within 200 metres of any monument "glorifying the victory and memory of the Soviet Army or its soldiers in Latvia". This measure effectively outlawed any collective tributes, as well as the laying of wreaths and flowers at burial sites.

On 20 April 2023, the Latvian Saeima passed the Law on the Ban on Certain Public Events on 9 May, which introduced restrictions on mass gatherings (marches, pickets, etc.) and the use of pyrotechnics on that day, with the sole exception of events commemorating Europe Day.

On 12 May 2022, Latvian MPs voted to suspend Article 13 of the 1994 Russian-Latvian intergovernmental agreement on the Social Security of Russian Military Pensioners and Their Family Members Residing in Latvia, under which official Riga guaranteed to "upkeep, maintain, and preserve" memorial sites on its territory. To implement this decision, on 13 May 2022, Riga City Council voted by a majority of 39 to 13 to dismantle the Monument to the Soldiers Liberators in Victory Park.

In line with this policy of dismantling Soviet military heritage sites, on 16 June 2022 the Latvian Saeima passed the Law on the Prohibition of Displaying Objects Glorifying Soviet and Nazi Regimes and Their Demolition in the Territory of the Republic of Latvia, which required local authorities to dismantle Soviet memorials by 30 November 2022, including the aforementioned Monument to the Soldiers Liberators in Riga. In addition to this

law, on 14 July 2022 the country's government approved a list of 69 Soviet monuments to be mandatorily demolished by 15 November 2022.

According to preliminary estimates, more than 100 monuments to Red Army soldiers and partisans who helped liberate the country from Nazi invaders were demolished as part of this campaign. During the same reporting period, in breach of the 2008 bilateral intergovernmental Agreement on the Status of Burial Sites, under which both sides pledged to ensure to "upkeep, maintain, and preserve burial sites located on their respective territories", local authorities demolished at least four military gravesites in the city of Jēkabpils, the villages of Rudbārži, Šķaune, and Jaunsāti, having exhumed the soldiers' remains and reburied them in municipal cemeteries.

The numerous notes of protest sent by the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which condemned the unlawful demolition of Soviet memorials and called on Latvia to fulfill its international obligations regarding military memorials, continue to be ignored.

While fighting actively against Soviet memorial and historical heritage, the Latvian authorities continue to champion the "sanctity" of the Latvian Waffen-SS legionnaires.

Latvia traditionally votes against the annual UN General Assembly Resolution on Combating the Glorification of Nazism, sponsored by Russia and co-authors.

On 16 November 2021, the Saeima officially established 2 March as the "National Partisans" Armed Resistance Remembrance Day" to commemorate fighting of the "Forest Brothers" in the Stompaku Bogs area of Viļaka Municipality. In 2022, events marking the occasion were held for the first time under the auspices of an official national "day of remembrance", during which the then President of Latvia, Egils Levits, unveiled a memorial to the so-called national partisans buried in the marshes, who were, in fact, Nazi collaborators.

Furthermore, efforts by Russian compatriots to organise any commemorative events marking Victory in the Great Patriotic War face stark opposition from local authorities. In particular, as a routine pretext for prosecuting them, Latvian law enforcement agencies have recently been relying on Article 81 of the country's Criminal Law ("Incitement to Ethnic Hatred and Enmity"), which carries a prison sentence of up to 10 years. Moreover, any Russian-speaking resident of the Republic seen demonstrating even the slightest public activity in support of Russia's foreign policy is persecuted under this article.

The Latvian State Security Service uses other non-legal forms of pressure on the Russian-speaking diaspora to prevent it from sharing narratives about the Red Army's decisive contribution to the victory over Nazism, such as "preventive conversations", threats of arrest, blacklisting of undesirable individuals, and the revocation of residence permits.

Lithuania

Under the country's Law on Meetings, organisers of public events are required to notify municipal authorities of the date, time, venue or route, objective, and expected turnout of the gathering in order to secure approval. In the current climate, permits for gatherings organised to mark Victory Day are denied. In particular, the last "Immortal Regiment" march took place on the grounds of Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius in 2019. In light of this, since 2022, commemorative events marking Victory Day have been held on the premises of the Embassy of the Russian Federation, while on 9 May, members of the public participate in laying flowers and wreaths at military cemeteries on an individual basis.

On Victory Days, local police are stationed at the largest Soviet military burial sites, such as Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius, to "prevent provocations", which, nevertheless, are often organised by the capital's municipal authorities. For several years in a row now, the Vilnius municipal administration has placed

rubbish bins labeled "for carnations and Soviet nostalgia" near the graves of the Soldiers Liberators, which is an outright mockery of the fallen heroes' feat.

On this day, law enforcement officers strictly monitor the observance of the amendments to Lithuania's Code of Administrative Offences adopted in April 2022, which ban the display and dissemination of Nazi, Communist, and other totalitarian or authoritarian symbols. These specifically include the flags, anthems, and coats of arms of the USSR and the Lithuanian SSR, the red five-pointed star, the hammer and sickle, Soviet military uniforms, the St. George ribbon, portraits of CPSU leaders, and even the Latin letters V and Z. First-time offenders face fines ranging from EUR 300 to EUR 700 for individuals and EUR 600 to EUR 1,200 for legal entities. For repeated violations, the fines increase to EUR 500–900 and EUR 800–1,500, respectively.

On 9 May this year, local police issued an administrative offence notice to a man who had come to pay his respects to Soldiers Liberators at the Antakalnis Cemetery, because he was wearing a St. George ribbon.

In addition, the Law on the Prohibition of the Promotion of Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes and Their Ideologies came into force in 2023, launching a campaign to "de-Sovietise" public spaces across the country. Citing the provisions of this legislation, the Lithuanian authorities have been dismantling Soviet-era monuments, including those located at the burial sites of Soviet Soldiers Liberators, and exhuming their remains for relocation (following amendments approved in June 2024). For example, ahead of Victory Day in 2026, in the centre of Šiauliai, a mass grave of Red Army soldiers, who died fighting to liberate Lithuania in 1944, was destroyed on the grounds that it was an "object promoting a totalitarian regime". The city's mayor even stated that its location had originally been chosen "to instil a sense of gratitude and moral obligation towards the soldiers of the (Soviet) occupying army, and to glorify it." There are plans to redevelop the site into a recreational area for

residents, with the graves set to be relocated to a military cemetery in the village of Ginkūnai.

An inspection of Soviet military memorial sites have found 96 cases of alterations to the appearance of burial grounds and 21 changes to commemorative sites. It was recorded that Soviet symbols, military-themed bas-reliefs, and plaques with commemorative inscriptions honouring the soldiers were dismantled across the board. In 70 out of 117 cases, the central or sole elements of the sites, including sculptures, obelisks, stelae, memorial stones, and monuments, were removed.

Malta

Since 2022, the Maltese authorities have systematically refused permission for the wreath-laying ceremony at Malta's main memorial to victims of two world wars in the city of Floriana on 9 May. Under these circumstances, from 2022 to 2025, this commemorative event was carried out by an initiative group of compatriots without the participation of representatives of the Russian Embassy, effectively taking the form of a "flash mob".

Moldova

In Moldova, since coming to power in 2022, the ruling party of Action and Solidarity has been following a sustained course towards the restriction of events on the occasion of Victory Day. The leadership of the republic, in practical solidarity with the Kiev neo-Nazis, is undertaking persistent efforts to reshape this sacred holiday, imposing on citizens the "Europe Day", which is alien to most of the population.

The fight against Victory symbols began in April 2022 with the amendment of the Code of Offences of Moldova that introduced fines or community services for the use of "military aggression" attributes or symbols. This category comprised the "black and orange two-colour ribbon," as well as the letters Z and V. Broadcasting and rebroadcasting Russian (i.e. Soviet) films

about the Great Patriotic War and television programs on a military-patriotic subject are also banned in Moldova.

In recent years, the Moldovan authorities have largely refrained from taking part in events dedicated to 9 May and other commemorative dates of the Great Patriotic War, limiting themselves to a modest floral tribute at the "Eternity" memorial in Chişinău (usually during the early morning hours so as to avoid inconvenient encounters with patriotic members of the public). Instead, administrative resources are used to install a "European town" in the centre of the capital with pavilions of EU countries and Moldovan state institutions, music and various gastronomic pleasures. On the pretext of reserving the site for these entertainment events, the authorities are depriving the organizers of the people's "Victory March" and the "Immortal Regiment" of the possibility to assemble on the city's main square.

It is noteworthy that, for the reburial ceremony of Soviet soldiers' remains at the "Şerpeni Bridgehead" memorial complex on 2 May this year, the local Ministry of Defence, contrary to established practices, refused to pay military honours. The true attitude of the ruling party to the memory of the fallen heroes is also evidenced by the statement of the Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on National Security Lilian Carp, who compared the fires in garbage dumps with the burning of the Eternal Flame monument.

An alarming trend is emerging with respect to the memorial legacy in Moldova. Official Chişinău consistently forms the legal basis for the dismantling of monuments of the Soviet period, including those installed at the graves of Soviet soldiers-liberators. Thus, on 9 October 2025, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic published an order approving the Instructions on the procedure for the construction, transfer and dismantling of monuments in public places. According to them, the demolition is possible if statues "promote a hostile, defamatory, derogatory attitude towards national spiritual values <...> and/or significant events in national history."

Over the past several years, in various regions of Moldova, with the assistance of local authorities and pro-Western NGOs, monuments to Romanian Nazi collaborators and cemeteries for "Romanian heroes" who fought on the side of Adolf Hitler in the Great Patriotic War have been erected and then opened with military honours. In 2024, six of such "memorial sites" were opened, in 2025 – five, in seven months of this year – three. In addition, there were cases of changing the names and meaning of monuments after the so-called "restoration work."

In this context, instances of vandalism against Soviet memorial legacy in Moldova and monuments to anti-fascist soldiers are being registered, with the country's official authorities offering no reaction of any kind.

The Netherlands

Since 2022, representatives of the Embassy of the Russian Federation have not been invited to events dedicated to World War II, organized by official authorities.

Norway

Hans-Jacob Bønå, elected Head of the Finnmark County Municipality in autumn 2023, said that the Ukrainian delegation should be invited to the events commemorating the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Northern Norway, while the Russian delegation should not be invited.

In 2023, on the anniversary of the liberation of East Finnmark from the fascists by the Red Army, the mayor of Kirkenes caused a scandal at the monument to the Soviet soldier – he personally took part in the displacement of the wreaths of the Consulate General of Russia, which were then removed altogether. The Russian Foreign Ministry peremptory conveyed to the Norwegian ambassador that the limitation of the rights of Russian representatives to conduct memorial ceremonies was unacceptable. The incident was described as an act of vandalism, an example of Russophobia, disrespect and trampling upon the memory of the soldiers-liberators.

In 2023, Norway refused the Consulate General of Russia in Barentsburg on Spitzbergen to conduct a joint visit to the memorial to Soviet sailors on the Hope Island.

In 2024, the mayor of the North Norwegian commune of Vardø announced plans to demolish three obelisks located on its territory in memory of Norwegian partisans who lost their lives in combat against the German fascist aggressors during the occupation of Norway.

In March 2026, a monument to Soviet soldiers who died during the liberation of the settlement of Neiden in northern Norway in October 1944 was desecrated by unidentified persons. The police conducted an investigation, the perpetrators were not identified. In April, the monument was restored.

Poland

In May 2022, 2023 and 2024, the Polish Foreign Ministry sent notes to the Embassy of the Russian Federation that the Ministry "in connection with Russia's aggression against Ukraine" "does not recommend" the Embassy to hold wreath and flower laying ceremonies scheduled for 9 May at the Memorial cemetery of Soviet soldiers in Warsaw. In 2025–2026 such notes were not received.

On 7 May 2022, the President (Mayor) of Warsaw, Rafał Trzaskowski, addressed the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Zbigniew Rau with a demand that State services prevent the "provocation being prepared by the Embassy". In response, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Marcin Przydacz said that the Polish Foreign Ministry has no right to ban the event on the territory of Warsaw.

On 9 May 2022 and 9 May 2023, the delegation of the Embassy, headed by the Ambassador of Russia to Poland Sergei Andreev, failed to hold ceremonies on the occasion of Victory Day due to opposition from a crowd of aggressive pro-Ukrainian hooligans. On 9 May 2022, a group of pro-Kiev activists led by Beata Maciejewska, a deputy of the Sejm from the "New Left"

party, tried to prevent the laying of wreaths and flowers at the cemetery of Soviet soldiers in Gdańsk, organized by the Russian Consulate General.

As regards the demolition of Soviet monuments in Poland between 2022 and the present, in 2022 there were 18 cases of unlawful dismantling of Soviet monuments that became known to the Russian side. Among the aforementioned cases, two – in the settlement of Wilków and in the town of Terespol – concerned burial sites: the removal of a gravestone and the demolition of an obelisk at the collective graves of Soviet soldiers were carried out respectively.

In 2023, eight unlawful demolitions of monuments or instances of dismantling elements of burial sites were carried out, including the removal of a memorial plaque from the collective grave of Soviet soldiers in the town of Tczew, the alteration, without agreement with the Russian side, of the inscription on the obelisk at the cemetery of Soviet soldiers in the town of Lubawa, and the elimination of the obelisk at the Soviet military burial site in the town of Chorzów.

In 2024, one case of illegal dismantling of burial elements (on the site of Soviet soldiers at the Bródnowski cemetery in Warsaw, the fence and columns of the entrance group with commemorative plaques were eliminated) and one demolition of a monument dedicated to the Soviet-Polish brotherhood in arms in the town of Nowogard were revealed.

In 2025, three cases of "depersonalization" (equated to demolitions) of Soviet monuments outside burials and three cases of monuments demolition not related to burials to soldiers of the Red Army were verified.

Portugal

After the start of a special military operation, the number of commemorative actions marking Victory Day on 9 May decreased significantly. Presently, these events are held in a limited format only in Lisbon and Albufeira, without the use of national flags and accompanied by police.

Ukraine

Since the beginning of the SMO, Kiev has established a wide array of political, administrative and cultural-propagandistic instruments aimed at abolishing "Soviet", "Russian" and other "anti-Ukrainian" approaches to the celebration of Victory Day.

On 12 June 2023, Zelensky signed a decree according to which "Day of Remembrance and Victory over Nazism in World War II 1939–1945" is celebrated on 8 May "in accordance with Western practices." Since then 9 May has been considered a working day, marked as "Europe Day".

The law "On the Basics of State Policy of the National Memory of the Ukrainian People," signed by Zelensky on 29 August 2025, states that instead of the designation "Great Patriotic War," one should use "World War II" or "German-Soviet War."

In general, in recent years there has been a transformation of approaches to Victory itself. A perception has been shaped of it not as a holiday, but as a mournful commemorative date, accompanied by the "de-Russification" of Victory Day.

Ukrainian politicians, historians, journalists and other "talking heads" loyal to Zelensky willingly broadcast a distorted version of history, according to which the "Ukrainian rebels" (whose collaborationist nature is preferably omitted) "waged a liberation struggle on two fronts against both brown and red totalitarianism."

Within the framework of this approach, not only the USSR but also present-day Russia is eagerly equated with Nazi Germany. Regime functionaries similarly do not refrain from using such analogies in their public remarks, proclaiming that "the ancestors defeated Nazism, and we will defeat racism." Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has adopted the practice of declaring demarches to the heads of diplomatic missions accredited

in Ukraine representing States whose senior officials attended the parade in Moscow.

Although Ukrainian legislation does not prohibit celebrating 9 May directly, this is achieved by indirect methods. This refers to the prohibitions that have been in force since 2015 under the decommunization policy, banning the display of "totalitarian" symbols. This category, as practice has shown, is interpreted broadly. In particular, there have been cases of citizens being detained for displaying the Victory Banner, wearing St. George ribbons and Soviet military uniforms, public performance of Soviet military songs, mailing greeting cards that contain prohibited symbols (including via the Internet), in some cases, even a public demonstration of photographs of family members who served as front-line soldiers. It is noteworthy that in 2024, the European Court of Human Rights as part of the "Borzykh v. Ukraine" legal case concluded that the ban on wearing the St. George ribbon in public places is not discriminatory and "is within the discretion of the state."

At the same time, the display of far-right symbols is practically not punished. The swastika is the only symbol that is "fully" banned, whereas no detention follows from performing the Nazi salute or wearing neo-Nazi symbols.

In the majority of cases, violators of the law face the preparation of a protocol and a fine under Article 173 of the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences ("petty hooliganism"), or the initiation of criminal proceedings under Article 436-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine ("manufacture, distribution of communist, Nazi symbols and propaganda of communist and national-socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes"). It should be noted that the punishment for crimes under this article is restriction or imprisonment for up to five years. Most often, a sentence of suspended imprisonment for a term of one to three years is imposed.

Among the most high-profile cases for 2022–2026 are the following.

Between 2018 and 2025, the Kiev police annually detained the pensioner Galina Savchenko, who came to lay flowers at the Eternal Flame monument wearing a peaked cap with a red star and a St. George ribbon. In 2025, the rector of the Holy Ascension Church of the Khust diocese of the canonical UOC in the Transcarpathian Oblast Vladimir Gnepa was detained along with the local resident Vladimir Tserkunik accompanying him, since both were dressed in Soviet military uniform. In the autumn of that year, the priest was found guilty and sentenced to 1 year and 3 months of probation. In addition, the Soviet symbols were destroyed by a court decision. In 2026, a resident of Kiev was forced to turn off the song "Victory Day"; in 2025 pensioners from the capital, who tried to sing it, were detained.

Another way of "reprogramming" Ukrainians regarding the celebration of Victory Day is to create administrative and technical obstacles to the holding of actions by public organizations and groups of citizens. "For security reasons", a curfew is extended on 9 May, police cordons are placed near memorials, visitors' passports and phones are checked, and the monuments themselves are "closed for repairs". Since June 2025, holding mass events requires not only obtaining permission from the authorities, but also coordination with the local military administration or (in Kiev) with the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Under these conditions, the only ways to celebrate 9 May that will not result in punishment remain individual laying of flowers or text messages of congratulations to relatives and loved ones.

Moreover, due to the martial law, neither 8 nor 9 May (as previously) are days off, which effectively deprives a significant part of the working population of the opportunity to participate in commemorative events. This both complicates the process of preserving the tradition of celebrating 9 May and transmitting it to the younger generation, and negatively affects the public image of those who celebrate. In practice, 9 May is turning into a "holiday of

pensioners, housewives and the unemployed". This is also reflected in the scope of who shall be punished under the aforementioned Article 436-1. In total, during the period from 2022 to 2026, more than 1,000 cases were filed under this article. According to research conducted by the Ukrainian English-language publication "Kiev Post", an analysis of a sample of 279 cases revealed that 124 defendants were unemployed, 84 pensioners, and 23 disabled persons.

According to an annual study by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology, the popularity of Victory Day as a holiday is steadily declining. In 2013, 40 per cent of respondents said that Victory Day is the most important holiday for them. In 2023, only 13 per cent of respondents stated that, and in 2024–2026. – 11 per cent. This trend is due to Kiev's measures to "erase" the holiday from the "national calendar," impose falsified historical data and alternation of generation.

At the same time, it is noteworthy that Google Trends, which analyses the popularity of search queries on various topics in the search engine, still records a sharp increase in requests in the format "Parade on 9 May", "Congratulations on Victory Day" and "Postcards for Victory Day," both in Russian and in Ukrainian.

Ukrainian state structures do not publish aggregated statistics on the demolition of monuments and memorial sites dedicated to Soviet soldiers-liberators. However, in 2022, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine reported on the dismantling of 145 monuments related to the "propaganda of Russian imperial policy" in general. Over 20 of those are dedicated to the Red Army.

In addition, in March of this year, the chairman of the Verkhovnaya Rada subcommittee on decolonization Roman Lozinsky said that under the law adopted on 21 March 2023 "On the condemnation and prohibition of propaganda of Russian imperial policy in Ukraine and decolonization of toponymy" (No. 3005-IX), more than 1,300 monuments related to the "imperial and Soviet past" were demolished. Also, the deputy, ex-director of the Ukrainian Institute

of National Memory, Vladimir Viatrovich in the spring of this year noted that the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine had taken the decision regarding approximately 900 sites for the partial dismantling of Soviet and imperial symbols. There are plans for more than 1000 similar objects.

Kiev regime also devotes considerable attention to the initiative to create a "Pantheon of Outstanding Ukrainians" on the territory of the National War Memorial Cemetery in Kiev. As part of the project, in the execution of which the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, Kirill Budanov, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory are personally engaged, active work is being carried out to rebury at the site the most "honoured" figures of Ukrainian nationalism, including heads of collaborationist organizations. In particular, Kiev plans to repatriate 98 Ukrainian nationalists buried in 21 states, including the EU countries, Great Britain, Australia, the USA and Canada.

The Ukrainian media widely covered the return to Ukraine on 21 May of this year of the remains of one of the leaders of the OUN, Andrey Melnik, and his wife Sofia Fedak, as well as the ceremony of their reburial. Moreover, according to official statements, it is planned to "return" the remains of the co-founder of the OUN Evgueniy Konovalts buried in Rotterdam. In honour of the latter, the "military school" created by the Azov combatants in Kiev for the training of junior command personnel is named.

In addition, the issue of transferring to the homeland the remains of the "last hetman of Ukraine" Pavel Skoropadsky (Obersdorf, Germany), as well as the reburial of the "head of the Ukrainian directory" Simon Petlyura (Paris, France) and the so-called creators of Ukrainian statehood Stepan Bandera, Ivan Mazepa and Philip Orlik is being considered.

France

Russian representatives are not invited to official memorial events traditionally held in France on 8 May.

FRG

Since 2022, Germany has been practicing restrictions on the use of Russian and Soviet symbols in the context of commemorative events dedicated to the end of the Great Patriotic War and the liberation of Germany and Europe from Nazism. They relate to public actions, incl. *Immortal Regiment* processions, (auto and motorcycle) rallies, laying wreaths and are, as a rule, of specific nature (most often the St. George ribbon falls under the ban). The relevant orders are issued by state or municipal authorities.

The Berlin authorities act most systematically and harshly, annually declaring total restrictions in the areas of the three main Soviet military monuments in Treptow Park, Tiergarten and Schönholzer Heide. Wearing military uniforms, its elements, military insignia and awards, demonstration of the St. George ribbon, as well as flags, emblems and images of the heads of the USSR, Russia, Belarus, Chechen Republic, Russian and Soviet military banners, including the Victory Banner, playing and singing Soviet wartime marches and songs are prohibited on 8 and 9 May.

Separately, the inadmissibility of expressing public support for the Russian Armed Forces' special military operation (falls under the FRG Criminal Code article that provides for punishment in the form of imprisonment for up to 3 years for encouraging the crime), for example, by displaying the symbols Z and V, images of the territory of Ukraine without the Republic of Crimea, Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions.

Initially, the restrictions in Berlin also covered the display of symbols associated with Ukraine. At that, the whole set of restrictions was presented as a public order mechanism, aimed at preventing possible clashes between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian visitors to the memorials. However, the restrictions on Ukrainian symbols were cancelled later on. This leads to regular provocations by pro-Bandera activists who try to disrupt or spoil the holiday for

patriotic compatriots and German residents who are sincerely grateful for the feat of the Soviet Liberator Soldier.

We consider as restrictions the MFA secret "recommendations" to the regional and local authorities (issued under the then Minister Annalena Baerbock) to refrain from inviting Russian officials to memorial events. Such instructions guide primarily the administrations of memorial complexes on the sites of former Nazi concentration camps who proactively send notifications to the Russian missions of the unwanted presence of Russian representatives at ceremonies dedicated to the liberation of these historical sites.

Moreover, the managers of memorial complexes do not allow the use of Soviet and Russian symbols on their premises with a reference to "internal regulations". In 2025, as directed by the management of the Dachau memorial (Bavaria), the Russian tricolour ribbon was unlawfully removed from the wreath that the delegation of the Bonn Consulate General laid. The German managers of the Russian-German Berlin-Karlshorst Museum also banned the use of "any political symbols" on its premises.

Czech Republic

Amendments to the Czech Criminal Code, in fact equating communism with Nazism and establishing equal criminal liability (one to five years of imprisonment) for the "creation, support and propaganda" of both Nazi or communist movements, have been in effect since January 2026. This legislative innovation could potentially be used to introduce various prohibitions and restrictions on commemorative events dedicated to the Victory over the Nazi Germany. As of 2026, this norm has not been massively invoked, being applied at the discretion of specific public officers and law enforcers on the ground. According to Czech experts, its application scale will eventually be determined by judicial practice.

At the same time, the solemn functions of the Russian Embassy (including the laying of wreaths at the Red Army soldiers' burial place at

the Olšany cemetery in Prague) passed smoothly while the safety was ensured by the Czech police.

According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, "out of 665 military memorial sites and individual burials in the Czech Republic, 28 were completely eliminated, and 22 were altered, that is, symbols, red stars, and inscriptions were removed" as of December 2023.

In May 2025, Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky said that Russia had allegedly no rights to the USSR Marshal Ivan Konev monument dismantled in Prague in 2020. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova called this statement "an excellent example of servility before villainy." Lipavsky "betrayed everyone, including his own fellow citizens."

Sweden

Since February 2022, the local authorities and socio-political community have considered celebrating Victory Day in Sweden as a sign of belonging to the Russian world, support for the special military operation and political leaders of the Russian Federation.

Dismissal from work is the most common "punishment" for those involved in organizing Victory Day celebrations.

Initiatives to organize "Immortal Regiment" processions in Gothenburg each time stumbled against the negative attitude of the local police, who advised against the action, allegedly for security reasons.

The cases of sacking compatriots over their participation in the traditional Victory Rally actions annually held in Stockholm are also known. In particular, one of the activists lost her job with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

The organizers of the event are each time subjected to unprecedented moral and political pressure in the Swedish central electronic and print media, while its main initiators are the same Russian non-systemic opposition, "Russian Anti-War Committee in Sweden" members.

In September 2023, unknown vandals desecrated a Soviet servicemen memorial stone in Karlsvik, by inscribing "Glory to Ukraine" in blue paint on its front.

A relevant note was sent to Sweden's Foreign Ministry demanding that measures be taken to restore the original look of the memorial stone, investigate, punish the offenders and ensure the safety of Russian and Soviet burials in Sweden.

Estonia

The period Estonia was part of the USSR is now officially proclaimed occupation of the country. Therefore, the start of the special military operation served as a catalyst for the escalated fight against everything that is anyhow connected with the Soviet Union or Russia.

The government unleashed a real war on the Soviet military memorial heritage. In 2022, an ad hoc working group counted 366 monuments erected in memory of Soviet citizens who died in the Great Patriotic War; 244 of them were proposed to be demolished or replaced with "neutral ones". It is reliably known that since the special military operation had begun, 105 Soviet soldier memorials have been dismantled in Estonia, with the 93 remains exhumed.

In April 2022, the country introduced a ban on the demonstration of St. George ribbon, red stars, any symbols using Z and V letters, flags of the USSR or Russia, the Victory Banner, any Russian military symbols, Soviet military equipment, USSR or Russia military uniforms in public. Also banned are meetings, rallies and events dedicated to Victory Day. A fine of up to EUR 2,400 is imposed for violation by individuals, and up to EUR 32,000 – by legal entities.

European Union

The European Union is consistently pursuing a policy of revising the results of World War II, which is expressed inter alia, in the desire of the leaders of European institutions to belittle or even bury in oblivion the Red Army's

decisive role in the Nazi Germany defeat and liberation of Europe from the "brown plague". This EU Brussels course is consistently traced in the annual European Commission (EC) leaders' statements on the occasion of the European Day of remembrance for the victims of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes (23 August), as well as in EU comments on the liberation of the Auschwitz Birkenau concentration camp (27 January 1945) and dedicated International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In EU member states, the end of the war in Europe is associated with 8 May. At the same time, the EU purposefully marks 9 May as "Europe Day." EU leaders have regularly visited Ukraine on 9 May over the recent years to demonstrate their solidarity with the Kiev regime and participate in official functions on this occasion. In particular, Chairman of the European Council Charles Michel (Belgium) visited Odessa in 2022. President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen (Germany) visited Kiev in 2023, and President of the European Parliament (EP) Roberta Metsola (Malta) in 2024. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas (Estonia), accompanied by the heads of foreign bodies of the EU member states, visited Lvov in 2025. In 2026, taking into account Russian signals about possible retaliation strikes against Kiev in case of 9 May Ukrainian provocations, EU officials refrained from such trips to that country. Nevertheless, on 7–8 May 2026 chief European diplomat stayed in Moldova, where she actively argued that "9 May should not be celebrated as Victory Day," since, allegedly, "atrocities had just begun" in a number of countries (meaning, inter alia, the Baltic states) after World War II had ended.

Since Kaja Kallas became the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in December 2024, the EU confrontational information and propaganda activity has sharply increased on the post-Soviet area. In particular, EU missions in the CIS countries actively promoted thematic events on the occasion of Europe Day in May 2025 and 2026. Simultaneously,

aggressive anti-Russian theses were circulated about the alleged military "failure" of Russia in Ukraine and growing problems in our country's economy.

EU officials resort to blackmail and intimidation of those countries that plan trips of their official representatives to Moscow to celebrate Victory in the Great Patriotic War. The EU leaders made extremely harsh and unceremonious statements in 2025, when the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II was celebrated. Brussels attempted to put pressure on European capitals and especially on the candidate countries who could possibly participate in Moscow festive events on 9 May 2025. In particular, the head of European diplomacy, Kaja Kallas, repeatedly and publicly tried to intimidate Serbian President Alexander Vučić with the "consequences" of his trip to Russia.

Following a EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 14 April 2025, Kaja Kallas announced that the participation of a candidate country in the 9 May Parade in Moscow would "not be taken lightly on the European side". This topic was actively promoted by journalists at the European Commission's daily press briefings, in particular, on 16 April 2025 the media close to the EU in fact demanded that the EC determine the "punishment" for those who disobeyed.

A similar stance is taken towards European deputies who do not share the European leaders' pseudo-historical anti-Russian narratives, advocating enhanced ties with our country in the interests of peace and stability in Europe. In fact, they are openly hunted by the European Parliament majority. They are indiscriminately accused of being almost foreign "informants and puppets," and the pet media periodically include them in their own "accusatory" lists of European politicians allegedly working "in the interests of Moscow."

Thus, the European Parliament reacted on the verge of hysteria to an independent European deputy group visiting Moscow in May 2025 to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany. During the 7 May 2025 plenary debate, some "renovationist" liberal faction members publicly

condemned their colleagues for their intention to take part in Victory Day celebrations, accused them of "violating EU values and attacking the EP integrity and reputation" and even demanded to prevent financing their trip from the EP budget.

This call was actually supported by President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, who demanded that MEPs take their official duties seriously and be aware of the consequences of their actions.

It is remarkable that the very 7 May 2025 address the Maltese herself delivered during an EP ceremony to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, promoted the thesis that the end of the war on the Nazi Germany allegedly brought liberation to only half of Europe, while its second part found itself behind the "iron curtain" under the tough Soviet "invasion and oppression."

Moreover, there is no reaction from European institutions to the blatant facts of destruction or desecration of monuments in honour of Soviet liberator soldiers in a number of EU member states.