

Speech of H.I.H. Grand Duke Georgi of Russia at the Celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of the Nations in Leipzig.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered here to honor the memory of the soldiers, officers, and generals of the allied armies, who fought at the Battle of the Nations here in Leipzig for the independence of their countries, for the freedom of Europe, and for traditional European values.

Two hundred years ago, the allied armies of Russia, Austria, Prussia, Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, and a number of German states, put an end to the French wars of conquest. Thanks to the victory won here by these allies, the balance of power was restored in Europe. But in praising the victors, we should not forget the courage of the French soldiers. Napoleon Bonaparte's aggressive wars brought suffering to many nations, including France itself, but the valor and devotion to duty of the soldiers of the French army are nonetheless worthy of our respect.

Even as we commemorate the Battle of the Nations and other glorious battles, even as we praise the feats of our ancestors, we must also do everything in our power to assure that the alliances among states and nations today and in the future serves only the cause of peace. The recent success of Russian diplomacy in resolving the Syrian problem persuasively demonstrates that any dispute can be resolved through negotiations and we need not resort to violence and war.

One hundred years ago, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Nations, the Russian delegation was led by my great-grandfather, Grand Duke Kirill of Russia. I am very pleased that, a century later, the honor has fallen upon me to pay tribute in person to the heroes of the Battle of the Nations on behalf of the Russian Imperial House. I express my gratitude, and that of my mother, Grand Duchess Maria of Russia, to all the organizers of this celebration and to all its participants.

Thank you very much!