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## **Germany: 70th Anniversary of Council of Jews in Germany. Mgr. Bätzing (DBK), “anti-Semitic attacks are attacks on our democracy”**

To mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (ZJD) next Sunday, 19 July, the president of the German Bishops' Conference (DBK), Mgr. Georg Bätzing, addressed a congratulatory letter to the President of the Jewish body, Josef Schuster. In the letter, Mgr. Bätzing praised the Jewish life in Germany and highlighted the achievements of the ZJD from its origins to date. “From the very beginning, the Central Council has been committed to the challenge of strengthening the unity of the Jewish community in light of the various backgrounds and experiences, and of the different cultural and religious traits”. For the Bishop, the integration of different religious streams into the Jewish community has been an important achievement, too, together with the foundation of new synagogues, the University for Jewish Studies in Heidelberg, two rabbinical seminaries and so on - all this testifies to the vitality of Jewish thinking and spirituality in Germany, Mgr. Bätzing stated. According to him, over the past decades, “the Jewish voices that have drawn public attention to anti-Semitic and far-right extremist movements have played an important role in the development of a democratic culture in this country. Last but not least, the Central Council has repeatedly issued statements to keep the public debate on National Socialism and the murder of European Jews alive. Unfortunately, the anniversary of the Central Council is obscured by an escalation of anti-Semitic attacks: “Attacks on Jews are attacks on our democracy and coexistence”, Mgr. Bätzing wrote in his letter, which also recalls the fundamental changes in Christian-Jewish relations over the past 70 years.

Massimo Lavena