

Martin Schulz warns of growing threat to Europe from far right

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News

Former European Parliament president calls for Europe-wide debate on rise of fascism.



Martin Schulz | Photo Credit: *European Parliament Audiovisual*

The European Parliament's former president Martin Schulz has warned of the potential dangers posed by the expected influx of populist parties in the upcoming European elections.

Schulz, now a member of the German Bundestag was speaking in Brussels at the launch of an event to mark the 75th anniversary this year of the end of World War II, said he fears populists will win more seats in the May election but will still be unable to garner enough support to win a majority.

He also spoke out about what he says is the growing threat from fascist and far right political parties

in Europe and elsewhere, saying they were only interested in a “my nation, my religion and my interest first” approach.

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“We need a Europe-wide debate on this and on the rise of fascism.”

He said Germany had overcome its own Nazi past to become a full contributor to European integration.

Even so the Alternative for Germany party, a right-wing to far-right political party, was typical of those that, he said, continually speak negatively about immigrants and asylum seekers.

“Their Bundestag members do it every day in the German Parliament,” he said, adding, “We heard their rhetoric in the past and we are hearing it again now, particularly on the issue of immigration. We must do all we can to stop a repetition of the mistakes of the past.”

Schulz is patron of Liberation Route Europe which is behind the Europe Remembers campaign to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II.

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“The memory of our past shapes the way we see our present and work towards our future. With their projects in 2019/2020 the Liberation Route Europe has a milestone programme that I gladly support and that I hope will help keep the memory of our continent vivid and alive”.

Speaking alongside Schulz was Rémi Praud, Managing Director of the Liberation Route Europe Foundation, who said, “With the Europe Remembers campaign, we aim to bring attention to two important years of remembrance and create the awareness that freedom should never be taken for granted.”

“The 75th anniversary of the end of World War II provides a unique moment to honour veterans. It is more important than ever to keep alive the legacy of World War II and its meaning for Europe today - it is the last call for younger generations to receive first hand stories from war veterans, and for everyone to experience this momentous occasion.”

He said, “By raising public awareness, the campaign will encourage people to reflect on and

appreciate the freedom that veterans fought for. During 2019 and 2020, numerous commemorations and related events will take place in different countries to mark the 75th anniversary.”

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

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