Abstract
Laws regulating historical discourse – or ‘memory laws’ – recognize the occurrence of past injustices and, in legislation regarding the Holocaust, they often punish their denial. They can also reflect states’ or supranational institutions’ geopolitical interests, especially in contested historical cases such as the Ottoman Empire’s persecution of its Armenian subjects during the First World War. A wealth of scholarship on such legislation has analyzed their ethical legitimacy and political consequences with debates centred on its implications for free speech and democratic governance. Such discussions consider whether memory laws should ever be adopted; whether they actually serve their purpose; and the extent to which they reinforce realpolitik in governing institutions. Drawing on this significant body of interpretation, this paper reveals yet another, and hitherto undisclosed dimension, of laws regulating historical discourse with reference to the concept of performativity. Scholars have long noted the performative aspects of law, particularly in courtroom trials, and how they produce performative effects – namely, meanings, intentions, and interpretations that exceed or reconfigure the form and content of the law. This paper demonstrates how memory laws likewise produce such performative effects by focusing on Armenian genocide recognition in France and Germany. It argues that a performative approach can facilitate insights into these laws’ hidden significances, be they concealed ideological biases or the duplication of political will.
Introduction

States’ official claims over their own historical pasts have affected the form and content of legal discourses and structures since, arguably, the 17th century origins of the modern “post-Westphalian” nation-state.¹ Those effects can be seen throughout various legally mandated public expressions of historical awareness, from the formalization of certain kinds of public remembrance and the construction of museums to the iconography of national heroism.² Following the Second World War and the genocidal crimes perpetrated during the Holocaust, states have employed an even more targeted way of sanctioning official histories through what have been termed, beginning in the early 2000s, “memory laws” (les lois mémorielles). National legislations criminalizing public denial of the Holocaust constitute the cornerstone of such laws and have become, often unquestioningly, the model for a global surge of similar legislation involving a slew of other historical atrocities.³ One of the most controversial among these concerns the near-annihilation of Ottoman-Armenians during the First World War under the direction of the Ottoman-Turkish Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti).⁴ Since Turkey officially denies allegations of its genocidal history, significant segments of the Armenian diaspora have conducted a decades-long struggle to promote genocide recognition by the international community as a way of pressuring the country into acknowledging its atrocities and making reparations accordingly.⁵ To date, about two dozen political entities have passed some form of legislation acknowledging the Ottoman-Armenian population’s persecution as an act of genocide.⁶ For very different reasons, recognition by two of these countries – France and Germany – has proven to be most consequential, both practically and conceptually. Their
roads to recognition reflect divergent historical involvements: Germany, as a complicit witness to its erstwhile ally’s crimes; and France, as host to the largest influx of Ottoman-Armenian refugees in Europe. These disparate historical trajectories along the axis of complicity color each country’s legal engagement with this contested past. Surveying their legislations on these historical events reveals more than their respective historico-legal perspectives, however. Examining France’s and Germany’s Armenian genocide memory laws also reveals what is the under-researched aspect of their performative function.

The performativity of memory laws is uncharted terrain. Such legislation tends to be evaluated in legal, academic, and more widely social contexts in terms either of its normative worth or of its political underpinnings. Thus, on the one hand, commentators consider whether these laws fulfil their ostensible ethical goals (ethical critiques), and on the other, whether and how they achieve contemporaneous political aims (political critiques). By way of an example, in the first category, much debate concerning these laws’ ethical worth focuses on the question of criminalizing discourses that violate the official state version of history. The criminalization of Holocaust denial constitutes one prominent point of contention with the ethical worth – namely, the dignity – of victims and their descendants spurring dispute. Other debates on such laws’ normative value focus on their wording and how they reflect certain exclusions, provisos, or limitations. These controversies in naming include, for example, characterizations of colonialism or the exclusion or subsumption of victim groups.

Instances of selective naming is also where analytical discussions focus most directly on the political aims and importance of memory laws. A significant body of such case studies examines how memory laws in transitional democracies as well as in post-communist and post-fascist states, selectively define – and therefore include or exclude – victims and perpetrators for political reasons. Another widely discussed case of exclusion through
selective naming involves the eschewal of the term “genocide” or the omission of the perpetrators’ identities in commemorative laws on the Armenian genocide.\textsuperscript{11} Political critiques of this sort differ from the more content-based ethical critiques of memory legislation. They instead draw less on its legal substance and more on circumstantial factors, such as contemporaneous political and social events, in order to demonstrate how these laws’ enshrinement supports or promotes their respective governments’ self-serving objectives.\textsuperscript{12}

In addition to ethical and political critiques, a fuller understanding of memory laws’ purpose requires a performative critique. Beyond an engagement with the geopolitics of memory laws – for example, how they affect the relevant countries’ foreign relations or privilege and disenfranchise certain members of society –, this kind of analysis would entail scrutinizing how legal and political actors employ language and actions that make these laws perform broader ideological and political roles that exceed their stated commemorative goals or their evident geopolitical underpinnings. In other words, an interpretative shift towards performativity theory would facilitate readings of memory laws’ implications beyond their obvious causal relations, including the more or less evident political agendas resulting in their inception or the direct consequences of their adoption.\textsuperscript{13}

The legal regulation of historical discourse is most clearly performative at the level of speech acts, when, for example, recognizing the Armenian genocide as such or when ascribing and/or admitting culpability. Such speech acts do things with words, as per J. L. Austin’s iteration.\textsuperscript{14} In what Austin described as their “illocutionary” function,\textsuperscript{15} they enact or manifest that which they state by virtue of the pronouncements themselves. Declaring a couple espoused, a criminal guilty, or an event as genocide are all illocutionary judicial statements that render conceptual constructs into consensually accepted reality.\textsuperscript{16}

Performativity is not restricted to linguistic statements alone, however, as the notion of “generic performativity”\textsuperscript{17} suggests. In this non-linguistic sense, it consists of
performances and practices that are constitutive of the categories of social life by human and non-human agents.\textsuperscript{18} Presumptions about ostensibly empirical categories such as “gender” and “the economy”\textsuperscript{19} have been shown to “exist” performatively in this manner. So does law broadly conceived, through its practices and performances, for example, of (non-) enforcement and its interrelationship with myriad other socio-legal processes, from social work to medical care.\textsuperscript{20} According to Kane Race and Casimir MacGregor, employing the performativity model in legal study compels us to observe whether and how certain statements or enactments of the law achieve their purportedly intended ends in either naming or creating social realities. As importantly, this model enables considerations of whether and how such statements and enactments may “misfire” by producing unintended or self-subverting consequences, and it can disclose when, where, and how “the law does not quite do what it says.”\textsuperscript{21}

Performativity theory provides a useful conceptual apparatus for identifying the broader effects, rather than the causes and consequences of memory laws, insofar as causes and consequences, unlike effects, refer to specific events leading to or resulting as definite origins or outcomes of such laws. Effects, as illustrated in performativity theory, entail more passive, but also fundamentally more powerful or far-reaching semantic, social, and political reverberations. Performativity, as per its most prominent theorist, Judith Butler, can “supply an alternative to causal frameworks for thinking about effects.”\textsuperscript{22} With respect to her most influential theory on gender, Butler has shown how thinking about gender as performativity can undercut assumptions that “there is a stable gender in place and intact prior to the expressions and activities that we understand as gendered expressions and activities.”\textsuperscript{23} Thus, according to Race, “[h]ere, performativity serves as a means of countering a certain sort of positivism and essentialism that structures gendered relations and is used to explain gendered effects.”\textsuperscript{24} As Race asserts, this and other disciplinary applications of performativity (e.g.,
Callon’s theory of economics) “generate reflection on the effects of certain descriptive, calculative, and gestural practices and invite us to think more pragmatically – and in a less deterministic fashion – about the production of certain ontological effects.”25 This approach thus makes it possible both to discern the constructedness of discursively essentialized identities and their corresponding actions as well as to uncover their underlying ideologies, customs, and presumptions. With their tenuousness laid bare, such identifications can be reconfigured, resisted, or even confirmed through alternative or additional descriptive, calculative, and gestural practices. Butler’s notion of “resignification” achieves one such kind of intervention to subvert binary categories of body (male/female), sex (male/female), gender (man/woman), and sexuality (heterosexual/homosexual). She suggests that through “parodic practices based in a performative theory of gender,”26 one can produce a multiplication of identities that cannot comfortably fit into existing binary systems, and can, therefore, ultimately contest these systems’ functions and legitimacy.

Considering memory laws with respect to their performative effects could achieve similarly revelatory and/or interventionist aims. Justifications and enactments of memory laws are based fundamentally in the complex and multifaceted binary system interconnecting recognition/non-recognition, victims/perpetrators, guilt/innocence, fact/fiction, or sanctioned/unsanctioned speech. Controversies related to such laws often stem precisely from their binary basis, which renders them unable to fully contain experiences, actions, emotions, statements, and realities that fail to correspond easily to any single category or that might traverse multiple and contradictory classifications.27 Moreover, many memory laws themselves, despite being constitutively and self-reflexively rooted in networks of binary categories, paradoxically, if unwittingly, ignore or blur those very categories even as they uphold and reinforce them.28 A performative approach centred on the effects rather than the causes or consequences of such laws would reveal these layers of (non-)signification and
would, as Race puts it, help “understand how a range of effects (including behaviors) are collectively and interactively produced through the performance and interaction of a diverse range of elements, extending beyond the individual subject, including (but not limited to) the exercise of the law.”

Given the historically contested and geopolitically charged nature of the Ottoman/Turkish case, Armenian genocide memory (non-)legislation – with its contradictions, inconsistencies, and, at times, widened scope of application – provides fruitful opportunities for exploring memory laws’ performative dimensions. Analyzing French and German legislation, in particular, in this way discloses how, on one hand, the interaction or juxtaposition of different memory laws in France reveals entrenched ideological biases; and, on the other, how the ethno-national performances of lawmakers in Germany resignify their political reach. Importantly, scrutinizing these laws through a performative critique uncovers how these two countries silently activate, advocate, subvert, and even suppress the memory and expression of events bearing more directly and immediately upon their own historical, social, and political experiences.

**Europe and Armenian Genocide Recognition**

As numerous commentators have noted, national and international politics have played a decisive role in instigating official recognitions of the Armenian genocide in Europe. This politics revolves around Turkey’s bid to formally join the European Union as a full member. The year 1987, when Turkey submitted its application for full EU membership, was also the very same year that, for the first time, a European political entity adopted a resolution recognizing the plight of Ottoman-Armenians as genocide. The European Parliament’s 1987 resolution entitled, “Resolution on a political solution to the Armenian question,” states that the European Parliament “[b]elieves that the tragic events in
1915-1917 involving the Armenians living in the territory of the Ottoman Empire constitute genocide within the meaning of the convention on the prevention and the punishment of the crime of genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948” (p. 120). The text does not stop at recognition and lists, with intensifying emphasis, a set of criticisms and demands for the Republic of Turkey not only to recognize this chapter of history for what it was, but also to implement a slew of democratic reforms. These appear specifically in articles 5 through 9, which call for the protection of civil and minority rights as defined in the European Convention of Human Rights and the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, and which stress Turkey’s responsibility to guarantee the free exercise of its Christian populations’ religious, ethnic, and cultural heritage.

Importantly, while the resolution explicitly acknowledges Turkey’s obstruction of its Armenian minority’s rights to their identity, history, language, culture, and religion, the resolution nonetheless insists “that the present Turkey cannot be held responsible for the tragedy experienced by the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire and stresses that neither political nor legal or material claims against present-day Turkey can be derived from the recognition of this historical event as an act of genocide.” The resolution’s drafters envision Turkey’s recognition instead as “a profoundly humane act of moral rehabilitation towards the Armenians, which can only bring honor to the Turkish government.” This text thus limits Turkey’s “duty to remember” its predecessor state’s crimes to moral-symbolic significance by officially precluding claims for further punitive and/or reparative measures against today’s Turkish state. In its call for recognition, the European Parliament does not limit itself, however, to a non-actionable moral stipulation. Despite officially exonerating the Turkish state of historically committing mass atrocities, and thus relieving it of any outstanding or future damages, the European Parliament nonetheless interprets Turkey’s refusal to recognize
the genocide punitively, identifying it as a fundamental and non-negotiable condition for the country’s accession to the EU.

In its resolution, the Parliament also proceeds to lay down this non-negotiable condition as a core requirement, among others, for Turkey to demonstrate its commitment to full democratic governance and thus to qualify as an EU candidate. The text’s Article I.4 clearly prioritizes Armenian genocide recognition as a membership prerequisite, stating that the European Parliament

[b]elieves that the refusal by the present Turkish Government to acknowledge the genocide against the Armenian people committed by the Young Turk government, its reluctance to apply the principles of international law to its differences of opinion with Greece, the maintenance of Turkish occupation forces in Cyprus and the denial of existence of the Kurdish question, together with the lack of true parliamentary democracy and the failure to respect individual and collective freedoms, in particular freedom of religion, in that country are insurmountable obstacles to consideration of the possibility of Turkey’s accession to the Community.35

The Parliament’s subsequent 2000 and 2005 resolutions36 reiterate Turkey’s requirement to recognize the Armenian genocide as a condition for EU membership. It insists unequivocally in Article M.5 of the 2005 resolution that the Parliament “considers this recognition to be a prerequisite for accession to the European Union.”37

The European Parliament’s resolutions, especially the first 1987 legislation, paved the way for and serve as the politico-legal backdrop of the national legislations that have since ensued throughout Europe from the 1990s to the present. In 2008, such legislation received renewed legitimacy when the Council of Europe introduced the Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia in response to “the unfortunate rise of racism and xenophobia across the EU” and motivated by the shared conviction that “[r]acism and xenophobia are direct
violations of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, principles upon which the European Union is founded and which are common to the Member States”. The Framework Decision’s stated purpose as per the preamble is “to combat[ing] particularly serious forms of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law” as it applies to both xenophobic and racist speech and crime and to define a common criminal law approach to such offenses across the EU. Article 1 lists those offences as “publicly inciting to violence or hatred,” including through the “public dissemination or distribution of tracts, pictures, or other material.” And, more importantly regarding genocide recognition, the same article identifies as a punishable crime “publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as defined in Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court” and “the crimes defined in Article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal appended to the London Agreement of 8 August 1945.” Put succinctly, this Framework Decision criminalizes genocide denial as a xenophobic and/or racist offence and requires all EU Member States to harmonize their national legislations accordingly, specifically by introducing penalties of no less than between one and three years of imprisonment for those found guilty of the stated offences.

Though left unstated, the Framework Decision’s restriction to crimes recognized by the ICC Statute and the London Agreement exclude Armenian genocide denial as a punishable criminal offense, since, given that the crime was codified decades later, there was and never could have been a criminal ruling on the Armenian case as genocide. This exclusion is also consistent with the overall tendency among European memory laws to hierarchically privilege the Holocaust as a singular event over and above other comparable crimes. Despite this exclusivity, the Framework Decision’s explicit engagement with genocide denialism has nonetheless bolstered and legitimized subsequent Armenian genocide
recognition initiatives. Accordingly, since the Framework Decision’s adoption, Europe has witnessed a sharp spike in laws recognizing the Armenian case, especially during the historical events’ much-mediatized 2015 centenary.\(^4^4\) Still, the greater legal imperative to recognize the Armenian genocide issues from the European Union Parliament resolutions, which in their most recent iteration justify the “commemoration” as an expression of the “spirit of European solidarity and justice” (2015).\(^4^5\) These resolutions have served as significant antecedents for recognition by Central and Eastern European countries, namely Slovakia (2004), Poland (2005), and Lithuania (2005). Similarly, the French Armenian genocide law of 2001 (after passing the French National Assembly and Senate in 1998 and 2000 respectively) – the first to be adopted by a large and influential Western European state – was initiated with full cognizance of the EP’s 1987 resolution and in light of Turkey’s intensifying EU accession negotiations.

**Armenian Genocide Recognition in France**

“What right has France to prescribe by law the correct historical terminology to characterize what another nation did to a third nation 90 years ago?” railed Timothy Garton Ash in a *Guardian* commentary denouncing the French National Assembly’s 2006 approval of a bill to criminalize Armenian genocide denial.\(^4^6\) His criticism echoed a public statement made a year earlier by a group of illustrious French historians and intellectuals gathered under the banner, Liberté pour l'Histoire.\(^4^7\) Their much-publicized and widely debated statement asserted, “In a free state, it falls neither to the Parliament nor to judiciary authority to define historical truth…We demand the repeal of these legislative provisions, which are undignified for a democratic regime.”\(^4^8\) Needless to state, Liberté pour l'Histoire has staunchly opposed all legislation concerning the recognition and denial of the Armenian genocide mainly on the grounds of the historian’s right to freedom of speech and scientific
inquiry. Despite such and further objections, France has demonstrated a widely pro-recognition stance, ultimately sanctioned by its 2001 law, which states simply, “La France reconnaît publiquement le génocide arménien de 1915” [France recognizes the Armenian genocide of 1915].

As to the identities of the genocide’s perpetrators and beneficiaries, the law remains, as some historians have noted, strategically silent.

The success in passing this law has been attributed largely to the influence of Armenian lobbying groups – specifically the Conseil de Coordination des Organisations Arméniennes de France – who have been credited with manipulating electoral politics in favour of the country’s 500,000 Armenians and their demands for genocide recognition. More charitable commentators – such as Sévane Garibian and David Fraser –, however, have also explained France’s legislation of another country’s history as the logical intervention by a republic that assumes itself to be, in Fraser’s words, “the home of les droits de l’homme” and exhibiting a “concretized…commitment to human rights and universal values.”

As the birthplace of human rights, writes Fraser a special burden is placed on the French nation to protect these universal truths and advocate for the freedom of all oppressed peoples. Part of the French civilizing mission (la mission civilisatrice) is to defend human rights and to protest their violation everywhere they might occur. On this vision of “Frenchness,” therefore, one might argue that all genocides…have a special significance for France. Their recognition by way of lois mémorielles would therefore be intimately associated with a concrete and ideological vision of France as the home of les droits de l’homme.

Yet, this possible justification cannot withstand the fact that France has not made similar pronouncements regarding atrocities committed by other recent or aspiring EU member states (e.g. Hungary and Poland), nor has it memorialized events pertaining to the
many other immigrant groups residing in the country. A more convincing view, as propounded by such notable historians and commentators as Raymond Kévorkian and Boris Adjemian, maintains the centrality of geopolitics, regarding especially Turkey’s prospective EU accession, as France’s foremost motivation. The relatively minuscule French-Armenian electorate numbering a mere 500,000 here becomes of negligible import. These scholars emphasize a more formidable and actively courted electorate instead, one being mainly French, conservative, anti-Muslim, and anti-EU. The facts concerning proposals to criminalize Armenian genocide denial between 2006 and now – all having been unsuccessful – support this interpretation. Kévorkian convincingly observes how erstwhile President Nicolas Sarkozy’s support for a 2011 proposal to amend the 2001 Armenian genocide law with the denial provision from the 1990 loi Gayssot reflected both his own and his conservative supporters’ reluctance to see a majority Muslim country join the EU. While advocating for criminalization, Sarkozy had also surreptitiously sent his advisor to Ankara to assure Turkish leaders that a proposal to criminalize Armenian genocide denial would never pass the French Senate vote.

These important observations regarding the instrumentalization of Armenian genocide recognition toward geopolitical objectives facilitate the perception of another significant and overlooked phenomenon, wherein Armenian genocide recognition becomes implicated in the French national struggle with its problematic histories and their contemporary demographic reverberations. In 2005, a year before Armenian genocide denial’s criminalization was adopted by the French National Assembly, another memory law, known infamously as the loi Mekachera, was put into motion, “concerning the gratitude of the Nation toward its repatriated French citizens.” It was drafted to recognize the contributions made by the French presence abroad, i.e. French colonial occupation, as stated in its first article: “The Nation expresses its recognition to the women and men who participated in the work
accomplished by France in its former Departments of France in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Indochina as well as the territories formerly placed under French sovereignty.”

The proposed law’s most controversial claim concerned article 4, resulting in Liberté pour l’Histoire’s denouncement mentioned above. In addition to its official celebration of France’s “work” abroad, article 4 required the instruction of a revisionist French colonial history in the public curriculum. It stated, specifically, “Educational programs [must] recognize in particular the positive role of the French presence abroad, especially in North Africa, and accord to history and to the sacrifices of the French army’s combatants in these territories the eminent place which they deserve.” After major public outcry, the law was amended in 2006 and article 4 was revised to require only that “university research programs accord to history the French presence abroad” and that “oral and written sources available in France and abroad be assessed together.”

What had prompted the revisionist pro-colonial loi Mekachera was its anti-colonial antecedent of 2001 known as the loi Taubira. In this law “concerning the recognition of the slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity,” “The French Republic recognizes that the transatlantic African slave trade as well as the slave trade in the Indian Ocean, on the one hand, and slavery, on the other hand, perpetrated since the 16th century in the Americas, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and Europe against African, Amerindian, Madagascan, and Indian populations constitute a crime against humanity” (article 1). Importantly, considering the subsequent loi Mekachera, the second article requires school programs and programs in historical research and the human sciences to “accord to the African slave trade and slavery the place they deserve.” It also states, “The cooperation permitting the placement of written archives in Europe in connection with oral sources and archaeological knowledge gathered in Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean and in all the other territories having experienced slavery will be encouraged and promoted.” As the controversial former president of Liberté pour
l’Histoire, René Rémond has noted, these two laws – Taubira followed by Mekachera – are ideologically symmetrical: “the controversial amendment on the positive aspects of coloniziation [in the loi Mekachera] are in fact a direct riposte to this law [loi Taubira]. The latter, by declaring slavery a crime against humanity, carried out the condemnation of colonialism’s occurrence. These two texts are symmetrical and unified. The first considers only the negative aspects, and the second emphasizes the positive aspects.”

The unsuccessful 2006 attempt to criminalize Armenian genocide denial – as well as its subsequent iterations in 2011 and thereafter – can be read as a complementary aspect of the loi Mekachera, especially insofar as, according to Adjemian, “The denunciation of the slave trade as a crime against humanity is implicitly perceived as a condemnation of the West, of its history and its heritage.” The contemporaneous proposal to penalize Armenian genocide denial coincides thus with the loi Mekachera’s concomitant effort to redress this perceived threat to the West’s legacy and heritage with an optimistic revisionist reading of French colonialism. French solidarity with the Armenian cause provides an optimal avenue of historical rehabilitation, illustrated, for example, by Garibian, who legitimizes French recognition of the Armenian genocide with reference to the following three facts: a) “France’s active and important role in the treatment of the 19th century Eastern Question, which the French Armenophile movement subsequently echoed;” b) “France’s clear position, alongside Great Britain and Russia, in the condemnation of [Turkey’s] ‘crimes against humanity and civilization;’” and c) “in the frame of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 [France’s position] in favour of putting in place a special international jurisdiction for judging those responsible for the massacres of Armenians.” One could add to these Fraser’s claim that “[o]ne might begin to categorize the question of the Armenian genocide as a French issue by placing it in some context of the responsibility, historical or otherwise, of France as a Great Power whose inaction aided and abetted the genocide in the first place and whose
complicity with the Ataturk and subsequent Turkish regimes allowed the amnesia and amnesty of the Armenian genocide to install themselves across Europe.” These are facts that have not entered statements of official French recognition. More importantly, however, especially with respect to the relationship between Armenian genocide recognition and French historical rehabilitation, and again as per Fraser, “Into this mix, one would need to add the important factor that the Armenians were Orthodox Christians and that genocide was perpetrated by Muslim Turks and Kurds; both the historical and current understandings of the ‘Muslim Other’ and of a Christian Europe must necessarily be understood as informing—if not determining—factors in the politics of the Armenian genocide outside Turkey.”

French Armenian genocide recognition, then, can be read as a balancing law that serves to preserve a semblance of French (non-Muslim) civilizational superiority at a time of national reckoning about French colonial history. Such recognition serves a performative function, insofar as its underlying motives extend beyond the specificity of the Armenian genocide. To that end, it reflects a political will to deny past French state crimes and to (re-)inscribe a contemporary national historical narrative of Western (contra non-Western) progress and emancipation. Given the religious presumptions in this case – Armenians as Christian, Turks and Kurds as Muslim –, non-Western here also connotes non-Christian, thereby intimating the religious self-consciousness of a self-declared and staunchly secular state.

**Armenian Genocide Recognition in Germany**

On the day that the German Parliament met to vote on its Armenian genocide resolution, its most active advocate, Green Party MP, Cem Özdemir, was asked, “What kind of signal are you hoping to send to the outside world, assuming this resolution does get passed today?” He responded, “One-hundred-and-one year [sic.] after the genocide, I think
it’s time for recognition. It’s time that we as the country that unfortunately was at the side of the Ottoman Empire, knew exactly what was happening, takes [sic.] responsibility.” It marked an unprecedented moment for two reasons. For the first time in more than five decades of Armenian genocide activism, a state, through one of its leading statesmen, was voluntarily revising its official position to accept its culpability in this genocidal event. Additionally, that statesman, himself one of the law’s instigators and its most ardent champion, is a naturalized part ethnic-Turk with strong representative ties to Germany’s practicing Muslim Turks. This 2016 German resolution entitled, “Remembrance and commemoration of the genocide of the Armenians and other Christian minorities in the years 1915 and 1916,” was turning two of the chief goals of genocide recognition advocacy – official public acknowledgment of state culpability and a Turkish expression of such state guilt – into politico-judicial reality.

The German Empire’s involvement in the Ottoman-Armenians’ devastation has been documented widely, receiving renewed emphasis in both cultural and scholarly circles in the years leading up to the genocide’s 2015 centenary. The 2010 German documentary film, Aghet: Ein Völkermord (Friedler), brought some dimensions of that historical guilt to greater public awareness. More importantly, scholarship beginning in the late 1990s, especially with the work of Hilmar Kaiser (1997), has elaborated on the deeper and more direct dimensions of German knowledge and assistance in realizing the Young Turks’ extermination plans. By revealing the realpolitik and international stakes at play leading up to and during these crimes, such studies have been crucial in widening scholarly and public discussions of these atrocities beyond the polarized issue of Armenian victimization and Turkish perpetration. That is not to say that the Armenians who experienced and survived these events were oblivious of the German Empire’s involvement, as the countless Armenian memoirs, commentaries, and fictional works that appeared after WWI attest to German collusion and
abetting. German responsibility featured as prominently as Turkish guilt among survivors’ earliest demands for justice, such that Ottoman-Armenian survivor, Hagop Oshagan’s (1883–1948) only literary piece representing these atrocities is addressed to Kaiser Wilhelm II (1983). Nevertheless, the post-1965 era of Armenian mobilization to recognize the genocide de-emphasized or entirely excluded German historical responsibility, perhaps so as to avoid antagonizing a possible European ally or in anticipation of the potential “competition” that such acknowledgment would generate within German society vis à vis the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{76}

The German initiative to recognize the Armenian genocide was ultimately homegrown, owing little or nothing to German-Armenian activism. More immediately relevant and imperative were the fact that Germany hosts a population of three million ethnic Turks; that ethnic Turkish politicians had occupied representative seats in Germany; that Turkish government and society of the early 2000s was demonstrating unprecedented outspokenness about the country’s genocidal history, albeit in a general climate of ongoing denial; and that the states of Armenia and Turkey had embarked on a promising, though short-lived attempt to normalize inter-state relations, culminating in the 2009 joint agreement to two protocols: one to create official diplomatic ties between the two countries, and the other, to open their common border.\textsuperscript{77}

Some of these facts gave rise to the German resolution of 2005, which recognized the fate of Ottoman-Armenians as the victims of Ottoman state crimes and mass atrocities, but not as the victims of genocide \textit{per se}. The resolution – “Commemorating the expulsion and massacre of the Armenians in 1915”\textsuperscript{78} – provides a twofold justification, focusing, in the first instance on contemporary Turkey’s suppression of free speech and inquiry, and, in the second, on Germany’s historical responsibility for these crimes. In condemning ongoing undemocratic and repressive practices in Turkey, the resolution states, “The German Bundestag deplores the fact that a full discussion of these events of the past in the Ottoman
Empire is still not possible today in Turkey and that scientists and writers who wish to deal with this aspect of Turkish history are being prosecuted and exposed to public defamation.”

The text does not specifically mention the 2002 trial of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, who qualified as one of these individuals and who, according to Özdemir’s repeated public statements, was a close friend of the German politician. But, the resolution does specifically cite the controversial 2005 milestone conference in Istanbul on the fate of Ottoman-Armenians during the Empire’s final years, which, as the resolution states, was “prevented by the Turkish Minister of Justice and … the positions taken by these scientists, which diverged from the government's opinion, were defamed as ‘a stab in the back of the Turkish nation.’” While commemorative in name and historically conscious in motive, the resolution can be read as a condemnatory call for Turkish reforms on matters of free speech and inquiry as a fundamental prerequisite for reconciliation among Armenians and Turks, and also as the basis of European cultural alignment. Hence, the resolution’s opening statement, “The German Bundestag … believes that facing one’s own history fairly and squarely is necessary and constitutes an important basis for reconciliation. This is true, in particular, within the European culture of remembrance to which belongs the open discussion of the dark sides of each national history.” The resolution therefore serves as an invitation for Turkey to join this European culture by openly confronting its own national history.

The law then models that effort by acknowledging Germany’s “contribution to the crimes against the Armenian people” and its historical “responsibility” to make amends by mediating “reconciliation and mutual understanding” among Turks and Armenians “over the trenches of the past.” In this unprecedentedly self-incriminating declaration of official culpability, the text identifies the historical events and their institutionalized forgetting as a German national historical issue. To that end, it states, “This almost forgotten policy of repression by the German Reich demonstrates that this chapter of history still waits to be
dealt with in a satisfactory manner here in Germany.” But, aside from correcting national history or serving as an ethical role model, the resolution reveals another important consideration concerning contemporary domestic national realities. It states, “Particularly in view of the large number of Turkish Muslims living in Germany, it is an important task to bring to mind the past and so to make the first steps toward reconciliation” (emphasis added). These first steps, as the resolution emphatically and repeatedly pronounces, entail the enacted commitment to freedom of speech and inquiry, which the text identifies with a “European” culture of open public discourse. The law thus intimates its expectation of this European-oriented commitment from two interrelated and transnational constituencies – the Republic of Turkey and Muslim Turks residing in Germany – as a prerequisite for integration, both national and international such as, specifically, through Turkey’s accession to the EU. Moreover, it addresses the Muslim Turks of Germany as a demographic extension of Turkey, which can, in turn, affect transnational change in Turkey itself.

The 2005 resolution was unprecedented in its self-incriminatory form of historical reckoning. But, to proponents of genocide recognition, it stopped short of addressing the real issue of defining the massacres as “genocide,” and hence, as the oft-stated “crime of crimes” in international law. This reluctance officially gave way in the German Parliamentary debate on April 24, 2015, marking the Armenian genocide’s centenary, when Parliamentary speaker, Norbert Lammert used the term to voice the majority view in consensus with the German President Joachim Glauck’s pronouncement.81 Just over a year later, in June 2016, the German Parliament officially denounced the Ottoman Empire’s state crimes against its Christian subjects, notably the Ottoman-Armenians, as genocide. This 2016 text retains the major themes and aims of the 2005 law but elaborates further on the need for and means of German financial and programmatic support to promote historical awareness and, ideally, rapprochement through education and mediation both in Germany and among Armenians and
Turks. Importantly, unlike the 2005 law, it also confirms the distinctiveness of German historical guilt regarding the Holocaust with the proviso, “We are aware of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, for which Germany bears guilt and responsibility.” This disclaimer understandably safeguards against misinterpreting the resolution’s justification – namely, that German historical responsibility in these events necessitates the country’s official recognition – as somehow diminishing the country’s expression of guilt and responsibility for the Holocaust.

The stated “uniqueness” of the Holocaust – whose denial and denigration is subject to prosecution in Germany\(^8^2\) – partly explains the absence of any clause criminalizing the denial and denigration of the Ottoman events as genocide, despite the precedent set by the European Parliament’s 2008 Framework Decision encouraging the criminalization of genocide denial. Instead, the 2016 resolution, echoing that of 2005, clearly exculpates both contemporary Turkey and Germany from criminal liability, by explicitly stating, “A distinction has to be made between the guilt of the perpetrators and the responsibility of those alive today.” Özdemir’s speech to the Bundestag on the day of the vote likewise stresses this point. Concurring with the Federal President’s distinction between guilt and responsibility, he stated, “those who are alive today bear no guilt – this also applies to us, by the way, with regard to the Shoah – but they do bear responsibility. We Germans bear this responsibility just as the people in Turkey do.”\(^8^3\) Unlike the “proscriptive” legal precedent set in Switzerland\(^8^4\) the Bundestag’s resolution thus constitutes a “soft” law of a primarily “declaratory” character, which, as a “good-faith”\(^8^5\) measure, emphatically acknowledges “the inglorious role of the German Empire, which, as a principal ally of the Ottoman Empire, did not try to stop these crimes against humanity.” The pronouncement makes Germany the first state to voluntarily accept its partial responsibility for these genocidal crimes.\(^8^6\)
But, Özdemir’s speech on the day of the Parliamentary vote divulges another layer of significance, concerning present-day Germany rather than historical responsibility. “By recognising the genocide, acknowledging German complicity in it and stepping up our efforts to come to terms with it,” stated Özdemir, “we also seek to provide people in Germany from Turkish backgrounds with answers to their questions that are not addressed in Turkish history books.” The MP here pronounces the resolution to be a didactic intervention in the historical awareness or myopia of Germany’s three million ethnic Turks. In so doing, he asserts and mobilizes his role as this (Turkish) population’s (Turkish) representative. He broadens this representative role even further, when commenting on the same day in an interview about the imminent Parliamentary vote. Here, Özdemir acknowledges an unrepresented segment of the Turkish population, which he terms “unofficial Ankara,” and which, contrary to “official Ankara,” is both cognizant of and outspoken about an “unwritten story” acknowledging the Ottoman-Armenians’ genocidal destruction. The MP thus assumes a representative role for two Turkish populations: ethnic Turks in Germany and “unofficial Ankara.”

Özdemir, along with the ten other ethnic-Turkish MP’s who voted in favour of the resolution, certainly constitute, in their roles as civic actors, representatives of the German body politic, and “not an extension of Turkey.” Such separation of ethno-cultural and political identity remains judicially unimpeachable in this context. But, it is a nominal separation being formally true, though performatively untenable. In spite of the juridical facts and public assertions to the contrary, these MPs of Turkish descent took on a politically representative role by casting their votes in favor of Armenian genocide recognition. Moreover, no democratically elected official can legitimately claim to be oblivious of his/her identity’s political weight and influence, as evinced by so many electoral campaigns’ platforms. Accordingly, as the public face, and, in fact, as the leadership of a “memory law” recognizing the Armenian genocide, the German MPs of Turkish descent lent the resolution
an unspoken but symbolic intensity resulting in an unprecedented case of *official* “Turkish” recognition of the state’s historical atrocities. This effect certainly did not go unnoticed by the Turkish government. It prompted President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to question the German MPs’ Turkish loyalties by stating, “What sort of Turks are they?” and “Their blood must be tested in a lab.”

**Conclusion**

This assessment of French and German legislation recognizing the Armenian genocide reveals the significance of performative effects in legal regulations of historical discourse. It shows how such laws’ meanings and intentions are affected by such performative factors as, for example, their inconspicuous interrelationships (e.g. France’s Armenian genocide recognition alongside the *loi Taubira* and the *loi Mekachera*); and also, by the reconfiguration of their function through official figures’ public acts, pronouncements, and gestures (e.g. the Turkish-German MPs’ advocacy). In this respect, legal regulation of historical discourse is consistent with the general performativity of legal processes broadly conceived, which include not only formal components instituting, legitimizing, and sustaining a legal framework, but also supporting mechanisms and agents without such explicitly defined powers.

In this respect, memory laws constitute yet another example of law’s general performativity. As numerous scholars, such as Margaret Davies have noted, law’s active performance is not restricted to the courtroom and engages all agents involved in the law in any context. Legal pronouncements, such as judicial opinions, can certainly be performative, insofar as their interpretation’s tone or attitude can shape a given legal outcome’s purpose. But, more often, law’s performative effects proceed from a more encompassing and interactive web that connects social contexts, cultural environments, and discursive trends, all
of which together lend meaning and purpose to official legal pronouncements. As Davies observes, “It is, after all, not literally the statute or constitution that is ‘always speaking’ or even the individual judge who originates novelty in the interpretation of a statute.”90 And while judges’ courtroom pronouncements provide the clearest illustration of law’s performativity, judges are but one set of constituents who perform the law, alongside “lawyers, legislators, bureaucrats, and legal subjects through countless actions on an everyday basis which interpret and operationalise law.”91

When applied to memory laws, this approach enables a more integrative interpretation of the legal regulation of historical discourse with two significant gains: a) the conceptual means to identify how memory laws can enlist unofficial gestures and enactments in rendering their meaning, and how, in turn, unofficial contexts can actually enact the underlying intentions and meanings of such laws; and, therefore, b) the enhanced critical authority to scrutinize and evaluate memory laws beyond their content, as deeply contextual legal expressions. This would, in principle, leave politics little room to hide undetected behind the law and vice versa.

Considering the performative effects of laws regulating historical discourse also discloses certain nuances of power in practice. In addition to officials’ claims to the visible “hard” power of representative authority, such performances as those evinced in German and French Armenian genocide legislation expresses and generates representational effectivity as a parallel form of transparent “soft” power. All members of the German Parliament, for example, enjoy representative authority as elected officials; but they also have recourse to representational effectivity. Regarding the Armenian genocide resolution, those MPs of Turkish descent who both initiated and voted for the legislation “resignified” the resolution’s political import as an “official Turkish” intervention by tacitly, yet self-consciously, engaging their ethno-cultural identities. This gesture’s performative effect was to enable the
MPs to double the resolution’s semantic force as the expression of two political wills – both German and Turkish – and, in so doing, it provided progressive Turkish constituents in both countries with an anti-denialist platform.

Similarly, Armenian genocide recognition in France ostensibly reflects the representative authority of politicians acting mainly on behalf of their French-Armenian constituency. Yet, examining such legislation in the broader context of French memory legislation reveals its representational effectivity as an endorsement of French, conservative and Eurocentric universalism. Employing performativity as a methodological tool, then, helps expose what would otherwise remain indistinct but potent discursive and semantic features of both legal regulations of historical discourse and legal processes at large.
have acknowledged the occurrence of massacres, exterminations, and atrocities, without employing t
(2016); Denmark (2017); and the Czech Republic (2017). Several other countries and supranational institutions
Sweden (2010); Luxembourg (2015); Austria (2015); Brazil (2015); Bolivia (2015); Paraguay (2015); Germany (2016); Denmark (2017); and the Czech Republic (2017). The observation that Holocaust recognition or anti-denial laws have become a model for similar legislation involving other historical atrocities in no way suggests that this should be the case on the presumption that the Holocaust takes primacy as a paradigmatic case. However, many states, including Germany and Switzerland, for example, which do officially recognize other historical atrocities do nonetheless assert the Holocaust’s primacy or “uniqueness.” For a critical discussion of such hierarchical treatments involving recognition of the Armenian genocide, see Uladzislau Belavusau, “Armenian Genocide v. Holocaust in Strasbourg: Trivialisation in Comparison,” Verfassungsblog, February 13, 2014, https://verfassungsblog.de/armenian-genocide-v-holocaust-in-strasbourg-trivialisation-in-comparison/.

Notwithstanding such important critiques, modelling recognition of other historical atrocities on Holocaust laws does make practical sense, however, since they constitute the only such legal precedents available on an international scale. They are also conceptually consistent with the fact that, as Jeroen Temperman and others observe, “the contemporary human rights movement with its codified standards guaranteeing human dignity for all stems from the Holocaust. A denial thereof amounts to a denial of the entire human rights discourse.” See Jeroen Temperman, “Laws against the Denial of Historical Atrocities: A Human Rights Analysis,” Religion & Human Rights 9, no. 2 – 3 (2014): 151. Consequently, claims for recognition of other historical atrocities inevitably enter a human rights framework that itself emerges as a direct outcome of the Holocaust.

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The movement for recognition remains a central political issue among Armenians, as evinced by almost daily references to denial/recognition-related matters in Armenian periodicals worldwide. This movement constitutes the most cohesive and widely shared common goal for Armenian communities globally – including Armenia –, despite their otherwise geographic, political, and religious multidimensionality. So pervasive and powerful is this phenomenon, that it has elicited some limited social and intellectual criticism by less than a handful of Armenian scholars, including Gerard Libaridian, Marc Nichanian, Arman Grigorian, and Krikor Beledian, whose commentaries on this issue remain extremely marginal to mainstream Armenian culture. The overwhelming majority of the Armenian public supports genocide recognition by the international community and by Turkey. One excellent illustration is the fact that Armenian diaspora communities fiercely opposed removing the requirement that Turkey recognize the Armenian genocide during the 2009 Armenia-Turkey protocols to normalize relations between the two countries. Another excellent illustration is the massive acclaim that the 2016 film, The Promise, received among Armenian communities for promoting the cause of genocide recognition.

There is an abundance of academic and popular material about Turkish state denialism regarding the Armenian genocide. The issue gained significant international visibility with the death in 2007 of Hrant Dink (1954 – 2007), Turkish-Armenian journalist and editor of the newspaper Agos (Istanbul), who was assassinated in part for his outspokenness regarding official Turkish recognition.

These include Cyprus (1982); the European Parliament (1987, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2015); Argentina (1993); Russia (1995); Greece (1996); Belgium (1998); the Council of Europe (1998, 2001); Lebanon (2000); France (2001); Switzerland (2003); The Netherlands (2004); Slovakia (2004); Venezuela (2005); Lithuania (2005); Sweden (2010); Luxembourg (2015); Austria (2015); Brazil (2015); Bolivia (2015); Paraguay (2015); Germany (2016); Denmark (2017); and the Czech Republic (2017). Several other countries and supranational institutions have acknowledged the occurrence of massacres, exterminations, and atrocities, without employing the actual


8 The place of human dignity in law and its relevance to cases of denialism have received tremendous scholarly and public attention. David Fraser’s edited collection, Genocide Denials and the Law (OUP 2011), contains several chapters by Laurent Pech, Kenneth Lasson, and Emanuela Fronza that familiarize readers with the ethical force of dignity in memory legislation.

9 On colonialism’s characterization in memory law, see the latter part of this article discussing the French loi Taubira.

Uladzislau Belavusau comments on the exclusion or subsumption of victim groups such as homosexuals and disabled persons in his article comparing Czech, Hungarian, and Polish memory laws on the Holocaust. See “Historical Revisionism in Comparative Perspective: Law, Politics, and Surrogate Mourning,” EUI Law Working Papers 12 (2013): 1 – 31.

10 For important recent analyses on the politicization of naming victims and perpetrators, see the articles by Maria Chiara Campisi and José Luis de la Cuesta on the right to memory in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the 2007 Spanish Act on Historical Memory respectively in “Symposium on Law and Historical Injustice,” Nanor Kebranian and Piergiuseppe Parisi (eds.), The Journal of Comparative Law XIII, no. 1 (2018).

11 France’s 2001 law, discussed later in this article, is one instance in which perpetrators remain unnamed. Examples where an Armenian genocide commemorative law omits the term “genocide” include Germany’s 2005 resolution and Bulgaria’s 2015 resolution recognizing Armenian “mass extermination.”


15 As opposed to their “perlocutionary” function, by which statements receive their semantic force by precipitating certain consequences, through persuasion, dissuasion, etc.


17 MacGregor, 51.


expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law


This requirement does not appear in the 2015 EU Parliament resolution.


Timothy Garton Ash, “This is the moment for Europe to dismantle taboos, not erect them,” *The Guardian*, October 19, 2006, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/oct/19/comment.france


Bloxham, 224.

Further information about the organization is available at: http://www.ccaf.info/.


Fraser, 41.

Fraser, 40. Hungary, which joined the EU in 2004, was never obliged by France or the EU generally to acknowledge its own participation in the Holocaust or its atrocities against the Romani population as a precondition for EU accession. For the difference between Hungary’s global Holocaust remembrance and its local Holocaust denial, see Mónika Kovács, “Global and Local Holocaust Remembrance,” in *The Holocaust in Hungary: Seventy Years Later*, eds. Randolph L. Braham and Andráš Kovács (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016): 231-250. The same is true for Poland, which also joined the EU in 2004, and which, like Hungary, was never required to acknowledge its own role in the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust.

Poland’s anti-Semitism made international headlines recently with the introduction of a new amendment to the country’s existing Law of National Remembrance. See note 13 for references discussing this case.


Kévorkian.

The *loi Gayssot* refers to the French law passed in 1990 to suppress racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic acts. It criminalizes the denial of the existence of crimes against humanity – as defined by article 6 of the international military tribunal annexed to the 1945 London Agreement – and committed by organizations and individuals considered guilty of these crimes. See Loi n° 90-615 du 13 juillet 1990 tenant à réprimer tout acte raciste, antisémite ou xenophobe, J.O. du 14 juil. 1990, pp. 8333 – 8335. The text is available at: https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jo_pdf.do?cidTexte=JPDF1407199000008333&categorieLien=id

Kévorkian.

60 Loi n° 2005-158 du 23 février 2005 portant reconnaissance de la Nation et contribution nationale en faveur des Français rapatriés. The text is available at: https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=747DDA2FDF32F457549C2D675EE05CD1.tplgfr40s_3?idArticle=JORFTEXT000000444898&dateTexte=29990101.


64 Adjemian, 10. Adjemian importantly observes that in the cited interview, Rémont himself suggests that there indeed were positive aspects to colonialism.

65 For the 2006 attempt, see Assemblée Nationale Texte Adopté n° 610 du 12 oct. 2006 tendant à réprimer la contestation de l’existence du génocide arménien. The bill was proposed to criminalize Armenian genocide denial. It passed the National Assembly but was rejected by the Senate. The text is available at: http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/ta/ta0610.asp.

66 Adjemian, 10.
67 Garibian, 2.
68 Fraser, 40.
69 Fraser, 40.
70 Much has been written on the tension between French secularism and the country’s Muslim communities, especially since the 2006 “veil ban,” suggesting a clear anti-Muslim bias in the purported French anti-communautariste (anti-communalist) conception of laïcité. For an ethnographic approach, see Mayanthi L. Fernando, The Republic Unsettled: Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism (Durham Duke University Press, 2014).


72 While Germany had recognized its role in the “violence, murder and expulsion” of Armenians in its 2005 resolution, it had not identified the event as genocide.

73 In a 2017 speech made at a Toronto-based event in honor of Hrant Dink, Özdemir refers to his reception by Muslim German-Turks as a fellow ethnic Turkish political representative in an anecdote about his visit to a Turkish-German mosque on the centenary of the Armenian genocide. See “Cem Özdemir Interview & Speech: Hrant Drink Tribute 2017,” ZI e-chronicles, February 6, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOlz0P219sA.


75 See also Stefan Ihrig, Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016) for a further discussion of the Armenian case’s significance for German genocidal anti-Semitism.

76 Bloxham provides a detailed summary of the recognition movement in his epilogue to The Great Game of Genocide. See note 30.


79 Hrant Dink was tried under article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for “denigrating Turkishness.”

80 This refers to a conference entitled, “Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy,” held on 24 – 25 September 2005, at Bilgi University in Istanbul after two previous attempts which were blocked by the Turkish government. For a history of the controversy, see: http://www.armeniapedia.org/index.php?title=Conference:_Ottoman_Armenians_During_the_Decline_of_the_Empire.

Section 130 of the German Penal Code prohibits denial or playing down of the genocide committed under the National Socialist regime (§ 130.3), including through dissemination of publications (§ 130.4). This includes public denial or gross trivialization of international crimes, especially genocide/the Holocaust. See Michael J. Bazyler, “Holocaust Genocide Laws and Other Legislation Criminalizing Promotion of Nazism,” Yad Vashem, http://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/holocaust-antisemitism/articles/holocaust-denial-laws.html.


Austria’s 2015 Parliamentary declaration refers to “historical responsibility” as well, but relates that responsibility to the Austrian Empire’s alliance with the Ottoman Empire during the First World War rather than with atrocities committed against the Armenians. See Parlamentskorrespondenz Nr. 383 vom 22.04.2015 Klubobleute verurteilen Genozid an Armeniern im Osmanischen Reich Gemeinsame Erklärung anlässlich des 100. Jahrestages des Genozids an Armeniern. The full text is available on the Austrian Parliament’s website at: https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2015/PK0383/index.shtml.


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