

★ WHAT DO WE MARK ON 8TH AND 9TH MAY

★ WHAT DO LATVIA AND EUROPE MARK ON 9TH MAY?

On 9th May 1950 in Paris, French Foreign Minister Robert Schumann, being aware of the threat of a third world war that could engulf the entire Europe, presented a declaration to the international press, in which France, Germany and other European countries were urged to pool their coal and steel production with the aim of safeguarding peace and raising living standards.

Robert Schumann proposed that a transnational European authority be instituted to supervise the coal and steel sector underlying in those days the entire military power, as coal and steel were essential for arms production.

Pooling coal and steel production could ensure common grounds for the growth of European economies, and the principal motivation for the European great powers to unite was their conviction that only peace, not mutual wars, can foster the development of European countries.

9th May has a symbolic significance in European history, as on that day the first step was taken towards the creation of the European Union – this is the day when the European project was launched. Therefore, at a summit of the heads of state and government in Milan in 1985, it was decided that 9th May would be celebrated as 'Europe Day'.

This is a celebration for all the residents of the European Union as it symbolises unity among different countries, also those that once fought against each other.



Since Latvia's joining the European Union on 1st May 2004, 9th May is also celebrated in this country as Europe Day.

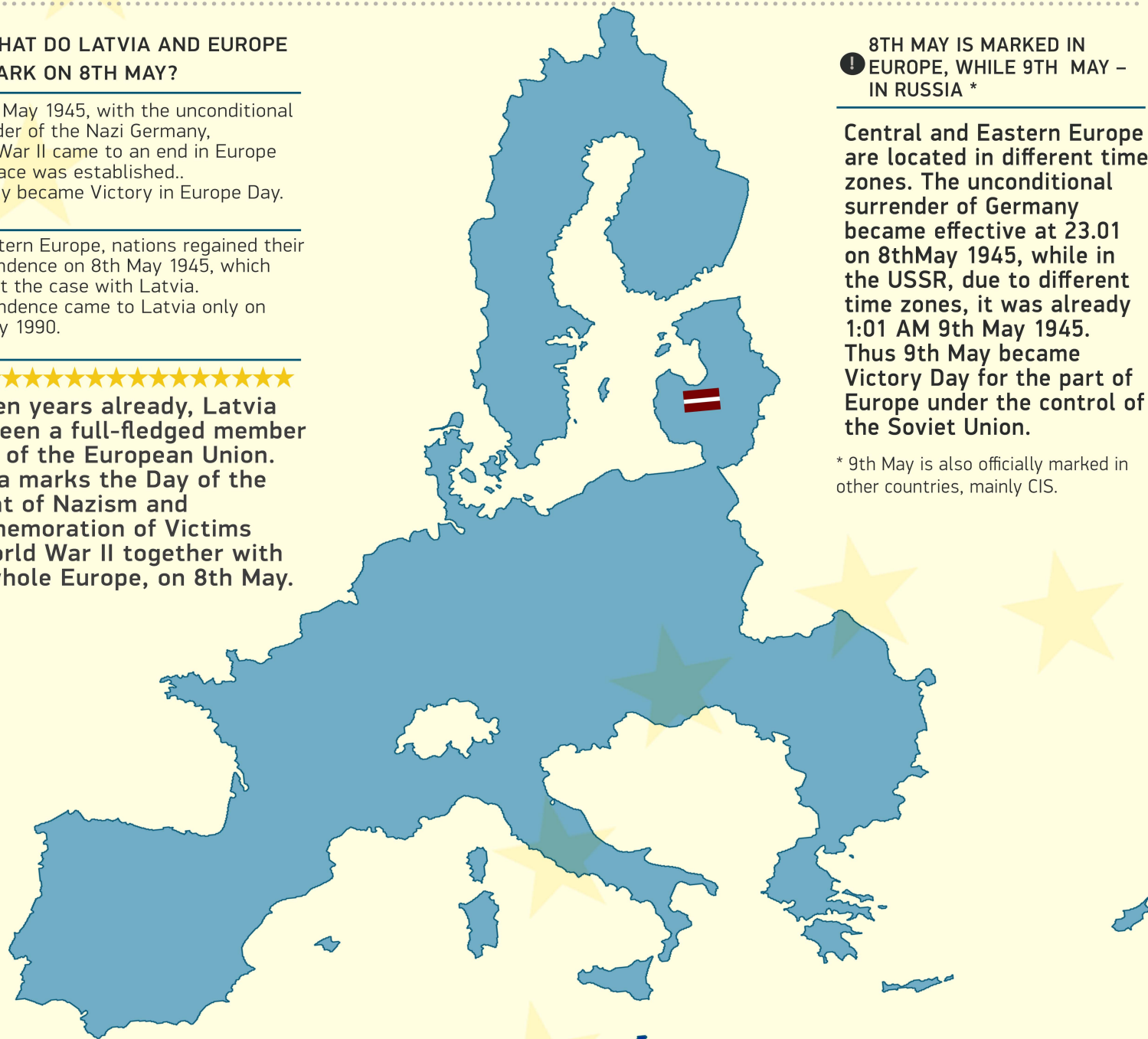
★ WHAT DO LATVIA AND EUROPE MARK ON 8TH MAY?

On 8th May 1945, with the unconditional surrender of the Nazi Germany, World War II came to an end in Europe and peace was established.. This day became Victory in Europe Day.

In Western Europe, nations regained their independence on 8th May 1945, which was not the case with Latvia. Independence came to Latvia only on 4th May 1990.



For ten years already, Latvia has been a full-fledged member state of the European Union. Latvia marks the Day of the Defeat of Nazism and Commemoration of Victims of World War II together with the whole Europe, on 8th May.



8TH MAY IS MARKED IN EUROPE, WHILE 9TH MAY – IN RUSSIA *

Central and Eastern Europe are located in different time zones. The unconditional surrender of Germany became effective at 23.01 on 8th May 1945, while in the USSR, due to different time zones, it was already 1:01 AM 9th May 1945. Thus 9th May became Victory Day for the part of Europe under the control of the Soviet Union.

* 9th May is also officially marked in other countries, mainly CIS.