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Press Information  
Paris/Berlin, May 13, 2004

*The decoration of "Großes Bundesverdienstkreuz " of the Federal Republic of Germany*

**was awarded to M.me Germaine Tillion /France by the German Commissioner of the European Commission Michael Schreyer and H.E. Fritjof von Nordenskjöld, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in France**

May 12, 2004, 5.30 p.m.  
Hôtel de Beauharnais  
78, rue de Lille  
75007 Paris

On initiative of European Women's Action Berlin, an organization informing about Women's cultural heritage in Europe, represented by Mrs. Gudrun Koch,  
the President of the Federal Republic of Germany awarded the

Große Bundesverdienstkreuz  
to Mrs Germaine Tillion.

Germaine Tillion has been among the first organizers of the French Resistance against the Nazi-Germany. In 1942 she was arrested by Gestapo and in 1943 deported to KZ Ravensbrück.

After Liberation she has written the most important research about the women KZ Ravensbrück, a book which was of particular help for Germans to elaborate their history and which has been of inestimable value for the education of future generations.

During her imprisonment she was informed by Margarete Buber-Neumann about Soviet Gulags, she branded that system immediately after her liberation.

Depending on actual political trends, she has been involved during the following decades without any regard on personal interests in the realization of her humanistic ideals fighting against torture, massacre and capital punishment.

For Mrs Tillion the French/German reconciliation as well as continuous intense reciprocal cultural communication between the countries constitute the fundamental base of a United Europe. Her knowledge of Islamic culture and countries, her active engagement for the countries of North Africa, her hard striving for a dialogue between Islamic and Christian cultures are evidence of her being an absolutely preeminent European in our dialogue between different cultures.

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