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Re: Condemnation Instead of Glorification of Stalinism and the Communist Totalitarian Regime

Dear Madam:

Dear Sirs:

As you are no doubt aware, on 11 May 2011, Ukraine began chairing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Ukraine will also chair the OSCE in 2013.

It is imperative that such institutions be chaired by states that espouse and aspire to Europe's vision of society based on the principles of democracy. Fundamental pan-European ideals have been forged through Europe's common history, especially in the 20th century. They include freedom, the rule of law, respect for human rights and, as a consequence, the rejection of totalitarian regimes, both past and present.

For instance, in several declarations and resolutions, particularly the following, Europe has condemned Stalinism and the Communist totalitarian regime:

1. Declaration of the European Parliament on the proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism (23 September 2008)

The European Parliament,

- A. whereas the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939 between the Soviet Union and Germany divided Europe into two spheres of interest by means of secret additional protocols,
- B. whereas the mass deportations, murders and enslavements committed in the context of the acts of aggression by **Stalinism** and Nazism fall into the category of war crimes and crimes against humanity,

[...]

- D. whereas the influence and significance of the Soviet order and occupation on and for citizens of the post-Communist States are little known in Europe,
- E. whereas Article 3 of Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote active European citizenship calls for support for the action 'Active European Remembrance', intended to prevent any repetition of the crimes of Nazism and **Stalinism**,
- 1. Proposes that 23 August be proclaimed European Day of Remembrance for Victims of **Stalinism** and Nazism, in order to preserve the memory of the victims of mass deportations and exterminations, and at the same time rooting democracy more firmly and reinforcing peace and stability in our continent; (Our emphasis)

2. European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2008 on the commemoration of the Holodomor, the Ukraine artificial famine (1932-1933)

The European Parliament,

[...]

- A. whereas respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are basic principles on which the EU is founded,

[...]

C. whereas the Holodomor famine of 1932-1933, which caused the deaths of millions of Ukrainians, was cynically and cruelly planned by **Stalin's regime** in order to force through the Soviet Union's policy of collectivisation of agriculture against the will of the rural population in Ukraine,

[...]

1. Makes the following declaration to the people of Ukraine and in particular to the remaining survivors of the Holodomor and the families and relatives of the victims:

- a) recognises the Holodomor (the artificial famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine) as an appalling crime against the Ukrainian people, and against humanity;
- b) strongly condemns these acts, directed against the Ukrainian peasantry, and marked by mass annihilation and violations of human rights and freedoms; (Our emphasis)

3. European Parliament resolution of 2 April 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism

The European Parliament,

[...]

K. whereas Europe will not be united unless it is able to form a common view of its history, recognises Nazism, **Stalinism** and fascist and Communist regimes as a common legacy and brings about an honest and thorough debate on their crimes in the past century,

L. whereas in 2009 a reunited Europe will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the **Communist** dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which should provide both an opportunity to enhance awareness of the past and recognise the role of democratic citizens' initiatives, and an incentive to strengthen feelings of togetherness and cohesion,

11. Calls in this connection on the Council and the Commission to support and defend the activities of non-governmental organisations, such as Memorial in the Russian Federation, that are actively engaged in researching and collecting documents related to the crimes committed during the **Stalinist period**;

[...]

16. Is convinced that the ultimate goal of disclosure and assessment of the crimes committed by the **Communist totalitarian regimes** is reconciliation, which can be achieved by admitting responsibility, asking for forgiveness and fostering moral renewal; (Our emphasis)

4. Resolution on Divided Europe Reunited: Promoting Human Rights and Civil Liberties in the OSCE Region in the 21st Century (the OSCE Vilnius Declaration of 3 July 2009)

3. Noting that in the twentieth century European countries experienced two major totalitarian regimes, Nazi and **Stalinist**, which brought about genocide, violations of human rights and freedoms, war crimes and crimes against humanity,

[...]

5. Reminding the OSCE participating States of their commitment "to clearly and unequivocally condemn totalitarianism" (1990 Copenhagen Document),

[...]

10. Recalling the initiative of the European Parliament to proclaim 23 August, when the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact was signed 70 years ago, as a Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for Victims of **Stalinism** and Nazism, in order to preserve the memory of the victims of mass deportations and exterminations,

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly:

11. Reconfirms its united stand against all totalitarian rule from whatever ideological background;

[...]

14. Requests governments and parliaments of participating States to ensure that any governmental structures and patterns of behaviour that resist full democratisation or perpetuate, or embellish, or seek a return to, or extend into the future, totalitarian rule are fully dismantled;

[...]

17. Expresses deep concern at the glorification of the totalitarian regimes, including the holding of public demonstrations glorifying the Nazi or **Stalinist** past, as well as the possible spread and strengthening of various extremist movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinheads; (Our emphasis)

5. Commemorating the victims of the Great Famine (Holodomor) in the former USSR (Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of 28 April 2010)

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to Resolution 1481 (2006) on the need for international condemnation of crimes of **totalitarian communist regimes**, in which it strongly condemned the massive human rights violations committed by the **totalitarian communist regimes** and expressed sympathy, understanding and recognition towards the victims of these crimes. It also stated that awareness of history is one of the preconditions for avoiding similar crimes in the future.

2. The totalitarian **Stalinist regime** in the former Soviet Union led to horrifying human rights violations which deprived millions of people of their right to life.

3. One of the most tragic pages in the history of the peoples of the former Soviet Union was the mass famine in grain-growing areas of the country which started in the late 1920s and culminated in 1932-33.

[...]

5. In Ukraine, which suffered the most, the peasantry was particularly hit by the Great Famine and millions of individual farmers and members of their families died of hunger following forced “collectivisation”, a ban on departures from the affected areas and confiscation of grain and other food. These tragic events are referred to as *Holodomor* (politically-motivated famine) and are recognised by Ukrainian law as an act of genocide against Ukrainians.

[...]

10. The Assembly honours the memory of all those who perished in this unprecedented human disaster, and recognises them as victims of a cruel crime of the **Soviet regime** against its own people.

11. It strongly condemns the cruel policies pursued by the Stalinist regime, which resulted in the death of millions of innocent people, as a crime against humanity. It resolutely rejects any attempts to justify these deadly policies, by whatever purposes, and recalls that the right to life is non-derogable. (Our emphasis)

Despite the above declarations and resolutions:

- a) on 5 May 2010, the Regional Organization of the Communist Party of Ukraine unveiled a monument to Stalin in Zaporizhzhia;
- b) on 7 May 2011, the Union of Soviet officers put up a billboard in Sevastopol with the image of Stalin; and
- c) on 21 April 2011, the Verkhovna Rada adopted an amendment to the Law of Ukraine *"On immortalizing Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945"* which introduces the concept of the *"Victory Flag"* – a red flag emblazoned with a star and hammer and sickle – that must be officially displayed on all buildings and raised on all flagpoles alongside the State Flag of Ukraine every May 9. It was under the red flag that Stalin's Communist totalitarian regime conducted a genocide of the Ukrainian people, ruined Ukrainian churches, executed Ukrainian scholars and cultural activists, and crushed all expressions of the Ukrainian national spirit.

In view of Ukraine's important symbolic role as the current chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and future chair of the OSCE, and given Europe's fundamental opposition to totalitarianism as reflected in the aforementioned declarations and resolutions, the Ukrainian World Congress urges you to demand that the Ukrainian government authorities immediately condemn all forms of glorification of Stalinism and cease promoting symbols of the Communist totalitarian regime.

Any action short of this would undermine the well-established policies and principles of the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the OSCE aimed at denouncing all forms of past totalitarianism and combatting any kind of neo-totalitarianism.

The Ukrainian World Congress is an international coordinating body for Ukrainian communities in the diaspora representing the interests of over twenty (20) million Ukrainians, with member organizations in over thirty (30) countries. Founded in 1967, the Ukrainian World Congress was incorporated in 2000 in Canada and recognized in 2003 as a non-governmental organization by the United Nations Economic and Social Council with special consultative status.

UKRAINIAN WORLD CONGRESS



Eugene Czolij
President

c.c. His Excellency Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Ukrainian World Congress Member Organizations