

VILNIUS DECLARATION OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL SESSION

Vilnius, 29 June – 3 July 2009 [Document AS (09) D 1 E]

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RESOLUTION ON DIVIDED EUROPE REUNITED: PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES IN THE OSCE REGION IN THE 21st CENTURY

1. Recalling the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights,
2. Taking into account the developments that have taken place in the OSCE area in the 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain,
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,
4. Acknowledging the uniqueness of the Holocaust, reminding participating States of its impact and the continued acts of anti-Semitism occurring throughout the 56-nation OSCE region, and strongly encouraging the vigorous implementation of the resolutions on anti-Semitism adopted unanimously by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly since the 2002 Annual Session in Berlin,
5. Reminding the OSCE participating States of their commitment “to clearly and unequivocally condemn totalitarianism” (1990 Copenhagen Document),
6. Recalling that awareness of history helps to prevent the recurrence of similar crimes in the future, and that an honest and thorough debate on history will facilitate reconciliation based on truth and remembrance,
7. Aware that the transition from communist dictatorships to democracy cannot take place in one day, and that it also has to take into account the historical and cultural backgrounds of the countries concerned,
8. Emphasising, however, that it is the obligation of governments and all sectors of society to strive tirelessly towards achieving a truly democratic system that fully respects human rights,

without making differences in political culture and tradition a pretext for the nonimplementation of commitments,

9. Deploring that in many countries, including some with long-standing democratic traditions, civil liberties are in renewed danger, often because of measures taken to counter so-called “new threats”,

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;

12. Calls on participating States to honour and implement all commitments undertaken in good faith;

13. Urges the participating States:

a. to continue research into and raise public awareness of the totalitarian legacy;

b. to develop and improve educational tools, programmes and activities, most notably for younger generations, on totalitarian history, human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, pluralism, democracy and tolerance;

c. to promote and support activities of NGOs which are engaged in areas of research and raising public awareness about crimes committed by totalitarian regimes;

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;

15. Further requests governments and parliaments of participating States to fully dismantle all structures and patterns of behaviour that have their roots in abusing human rights;

16. Reiterates its call upon all participating States to open their historical and political archives;

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;

18. Calls upon participating States to pursue policies against xenophobia and aggressive nationalism and take more effective measures to combat these phenomena;

19. Asks for a greater respect in all participating States for human rights and civil liberties, even in difficult times of terrorist threats, economic crisis, ecological disasters and mass migration.