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# Commemorating the victims of the Great Famine (Holodomor) in the former USSR

**Report**
Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy
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*Summary*

The Great Famine in the former Soviet Union in the early 1930s is one of the most tragic pages in the European history of the 20th century: millions of people died in the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and especially in Ukraine, as a result of cruel and inhuman policies and actions of the totalitarian Stalinist regime.

In Ukraine, which suffered the most, these tragic events are referred to as *Holodomor* and are recognised by the Ukrainian law as an act of genocide against Ukrainians.

The report honours the memory of all those who perished in this human disaster, and strongly condemns the policies of the totalitarian Stalinist regime, which led to the death of millions of innocent people, as a crime against humanity.

It welcomes the decision by the Ukrainian authorities to establish a national day of commemoration of the victims of the Great Famine (*Holodomor*), and encourages the other countries which suffered from it to jointly commemorate the victims of this tragedy, regardless of their nationality.

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## A. Draft resolution

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 vis-à-vis 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.

4. Millions of innocent people in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, which were parts of the Soviet Union, lost their lives as a result of mass starvation caused by cruel and deliberate actions and policies of the Soviet regime.

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.

6. In Kazakhstan, too, millions fell victim to the mass famine, and the ratio of the dead to the whole population is believed to be the highest among all peoples of the former USSR. Traditionally nomads, the cattle-growing Kazakhs were forced to settle down and were deprived of livestock. The Great Famine is remembered as the greatest tragedy of the Kazakh people.

7. In the grain-producing areas of Russia (the Middle and Lower Volga, the North Caucasus, the central Black-Soil region, the Southern Urals, Western Siberia and some other regions), the famine caused by “collectivisation” and dispossession of the wealthy individual farmers took millions of lives in rural and urban areas. In absolute figures, it is estimated that the population of Russia paid the heaviest death toll as a result of the Soviet agricultural policies.

8. Dozens of thousands of farmers also died in Belarus and Moldova.

9. While these events may have had particularities in various regions, the results were the same: millions of human lives were mercilessly sacrificed to the fulfilment of the policies and plans of the Stalinist regime.

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.

12. It welcomes the efforts aimed at revealing the historical truth about, and at raising the public awareness of, these tragic events of the past. Such efforts should seek to unite, not divide peoples.

13. The Assembly welcomes the important work already done in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and in particular in Ukraine in order to ease access to archives, and calls on the competent authorities of these countries to open up all their archives and facilitate access thereto to all researchers, including from other states.

14. It further calls on other Council of Europe member states to make their national archives open and accessible.

15. The Assembly calls on historians of all countries of the former Soviet Union, which suffered during the Great Famine, as well as historians from other countries, to conduct joint independent research programmes in order to establish the full, un-biased and un-politicised truth about this human tragedy, and to make it public.

16. It urges the politicians in all Council of Europe member states to abstain from any attempts to exert political influence on historians and prejudge the outcome of independent scientific research.

17. It welcomes the decision by the Ukrainian authorities to establish a national day of commemoration of the victims of the Great Famine (*Holodomor*) in Ukraine, and encourages the authorities of other countries which also suffered to do the same with regard to their own victims.

18. It furthermore encourages the authorities of all these countries to agree on joint activities aimed at commemorating the victims of the Great Famine, regardless of their nationality.

## B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Çavuşoğlu, rapporteur

### 1. Introduction

1. In January 2008, a motion for a resolution on the need for international condemnation of Holodomor in Ukraine in 1932-1933 was tabled in the Parliamentary Assembly, calling the latter to condemn the deeds of the repressive Stalinist regime and to commemorate the memory of millions of Ukrainians who became victims of the *Holodomor* (artificial famine) of 1932-33.

2. In March 2008, another motion entitled "75th anniversary of mass famine in the territory of the former USSR" was introduced in the Assembly. It was intended to address the tragedy of all those who became victims of the 1932-33 mass famine in the former Soviet Union, including in Ukraine, and called to support a study, on an expert level, of all the reasons and circumstances that led to these tragic events.

3. Both motions were referred to the Political Affairs Committee, which, in May 2008, decided to merge them into a single report and appointed Mr Alexander Biberaj as rapporteur. However, in January 2009, Mr Biberaj ceased to be a member of the Assembly and I was appointed to take up this duty.

4. In April 2009, the committee authorised me to carry out fact-finding visits to Ukraine, Moldova and the Russian Federation, and also supported my request to visit Belarus and Kazakhstan. I visited Ukraine (Kiev and Kharkiv) from 18 to 22 October 2009, Belarus (Minsk) from 26 to 28 October 2009, Kazakhstan (Astana and Almaty) from 3 to 6 November 2009, and the Russian Federation (Stavropol region and Moscow) from 22 to 26 November 2009. Unfortunately, it was not possible for me to visit Moldova.

5. Even before I was appointed as rapporteur, it was clear to me that the matter to be dealt with was extremely difficult from a human point of view: it relates to an enormous tragedy in which many millions of innocent people lost their lives, and which left deep wounds on the destinies of many generations.

6. It was equally obvious to me that the issue under scrutiny is controversial and has been instrumentalised; the countries involved have different interpretations of the facts, figures and events, and come to conflicting conclusions as to the causes, the responsibilities and the lessons to be learned from these tragic events.

7. Moreover, I felt that instead of uniting the peoples who had suffered from this human disaster, this dark page of history is being used to sow the seeds of discord or even hatred. I strongly believe that in no way should history be used for political purposes, and that historians, not politicians, should study it – and argue about it if need be. If politicians are to solve the problems of today, they must look into the future, not into the past. But that is exactly why I decided to take this report, and to try to find ways leading to reconciliation.

8. During my visits, and even before them, I accumulated enough information to write a monograph. I also was given as many books, leaflets and other publications to fill a small library, although I could not personally work with those which are in Russian or in Ukrainian and I had to hand them to the secretariat of the committee**.** Obviously, the format of an Assembly report is not an appropriate one for an in-depth study, and it is not realistic to even try and reproduce in my report all that I have read and heard about the Great Famine. Therefore, I do not claim to produce an exhaustive report, and will limit myself to some basic facts.

9. I am aware that the issue is too sensitive to allow consensual conclusions – not only are there different views from one country to another, but it is often the case among historians of one country and within national delegations as well. Therefore, I have no illusions as to my capacity to satisfy or please everyone with my report. That is why I have invited the parliamentary delegations directly concerned by the issue, whose countries suffered during the Great Famine, to submit written contributions.

10. In my view, this would allow these delegations (and parliaments) to have their views and positions included in the report, in the form and wording that they find appropriate. It has provided an opportunity for them to give information, facts and arguments which they find important and necessary in order for all readers to understand what this Great Famine meant for their country and their people.

11. The committee has agreed to include these contributions in the report, so as to offer to the reader a variety of facts, views and conclusions related to these tragic events. They have therefore been appended to the report.

## 2. General historical background

12. In December 1927, the Soviet leadership abandoned the “New Economic Policy” (NEP), which had been introduced by Lenin after the civil war, and launched a policy of “industrialisation”, that is, rapid development of heavy industry and the process of transforming a largely agrarian nation consisting of peasants into an industrial superpower. On this occasion, Stalin remarked that the Soviet Union was “fifty to a hundred years behind the advanced countries, and thus had to narrow this distance in ten years at any price.”

13. This policy required enormous human and material resources. While human resources could be found within the country (among the rural population), machinery and technologies could only be available from abroad. At the same time, the Soviet Union could not accede to foreign loans and had to import goods and know-how in exchange for hard currencies. The Soviet leaders believed that agricultural production was the only internal resource that they could rely on and decided to step up grain exports to the West as a source of foreign currency needed to import technologies necessary for heavy industrialisation.

14. One must recall that as from 1929, the Western countries were hit by the most severe economic crisis in world history. Under these circumstances, the industrialised countries were interested in selling their products, mainly heavy machinery, to the Soviet Union.

15. The Soviet agricultural policy also underwent dramatic changes. Until 1928 (under the NEP), Soviet peasants were allowed to sell their surpluses on the open market. In 1928 this policy was totally abandoned and the Soviet state started the policy of “collectivisation”, that is, the creation of *kolkhozes* (collective farms) instead of individual privately owned farms. Upon joining *kolkhozes*, peasants had to give up their private plots of land and property, and the *kolkhoz* produce was sold to the state for a low price set by the state itself.

16. The natural progress of collectivisation was slow and in November 1929 the Soviet leadership decided to implement accelerated, forced collectivisation.

17. The collectivisation pursued three main economic goals: to increase the efficiency of agricultural production (produce more grain for export), to liberate the workforce for industry and to facilitate the requisition of food for the needs of the state.

18. However, there was also a “political” goal: to eliminate agricultural private property (the only remaining at that time) and the social class of land-owning private farmers (*kulaks*). Anyone opposing collectivisation was deemed a *kulak*. The policy of liquidation of *kulaks* as a class was formulated by Stalin at the end of 1929 and led to hundreds of thousands of farmers and their families being executed or deported to special settlements.

## 3. Results of Soviet policies

19. Despite the expectations of Soviet leaders, collectivisation led to a catastrophic drop in farming productivity as from 1929-30, while the state plans for grain procurement were considerably increased in order to meet export commitments. The famine actually started in 1929 in the grain-producing areas of Russia and in Kazakhstan (which at that time was an autonomous republic of Russia).

20. Food requisitioning intensified in 1932, especially in the main grain-producing regions, as grain procurement quotas were put at levels which were impossible to fulfil. The combined effect of the drop in production (due to collectivisation), the bad harvest of 1932, and massive forceful requisitions of grain and all foodstuff led to the Great Famine in Ukraine and Moldova (which was part of Ukraine), southern areas of Belarus and many parts of Russia and Kazakhstan, which culminated in the winter of 1932-33.

21. The real scale of the tragedy is still difficult to assess. For Ukraine only, various researchers estimate the number of victims at between 2 and 7 million. According to the latest estimates of Ukrainian researchers, while in 1932 about 205 000 died in Ukraine, the number of the dead amounted to 3.6 million in 1933. In Kazakhstan, I heard the figures of 1.5 to 1.8 million out of the 4-million population. Many millions are also believed to have died in various parts of Russia.

22. Although the documents available now show that the Soviet leadership was aware of the harsh famine in these parts of the USSR, the general policy did not change: the central government and regional and local authorities persistently required the fulfilment of grain and food procurement plans at all cost, and did not hesitate to resort to repression and the use of force against civilian peasants in the process of food requisition.

23. The Soviet regime sought to hide all information about the famine, both inside the country and abroad. Foreign journalists were not allowed to visit the areas affected by the famine, and there were only a few articles reporting on this disaster in the international press. However, there are indications that the Western governments were aware of the famine in the USSR, which did not prevent their countries from buying cheap Soviet grain, regardless of the fact that its real cost was paid by the lives of millions of Soviet peasants. Diplomats posted in the USSR reported to their capitals as from 1930 that the famine was inevitable. A report by the German agricultural attaché Schiller regarding the famine in Ukraine was reproduced by several news outlets. In October 1933, the Council of the League of Nations asked the International Committee of the Red Cross to request information from the Soviet authorities with regard to the famine in Ukraine and the North Caucasus, but this request was rejected by the Soviet regime.

24. The Great Famine only ended in 1933, following the Soviet leadership's decision to stop grain exports, but people continued to die because of the consequences of hunger and the spread of disease. The demographic losses of former Soviet republics were huge and were further aggravated by the mass terror of the late 1930s and the Second World War.

**4. Ukraine: the main victim of the Great Famine**

25. As colleagues will remember, the issue of *Holodomor* (which means "artificial famine", or "killing by hunger") was first brought to our committee by a motion focused on Ukraine. Therefore, it was my duty to pay the first visit to this country, which suffered enormous human losses during the Great Famine of 1932-33.

26. I must say that the issue of *Holodomor*, restoring and preserving the historical memory of this dramatic page of national history, is being given top priority at the highest political level in Ukraine.

27. This fact was well reflected throughout my fact-finding visit. I had a long (more than one hour) meeting with President Yushchenko, I met representatives of all political factions in the parliament (except the communists, whose representative fell ill), and I was invited to a meeting with the Director of the Security Service of Ukraine who is investigating a criminal case on genocide.

28. During my visit to Ukraine, I had the opportunity to talk to the leading historians working on the issue of mass famine, to non-governmental organisations which are raising public awareness of the tragedy, to eye-witnesses of *Holodomor*, and also to look at various archive documents.

29. I heard many heart-breaking stories of the tragic destinies of those who suffered during these dark years. I believe that this is the most important, though not easy to stand, outcome of the visit: learning the terrible facts of the daily life of the people. These facts were hidden by the Soviet regime not only during the events, but also many years after – until the late 1980s and *perestroika*. I will refer only to the main facts which were reported.

30. Ukraine was the main agricultural area of the former Soviet Union and accounted for a large part of overall grain production (in the 1930s, about 70% of Soviet grain exports originated from Ukraine and the North Caucasus region of Russia). It was therefore one of the main targets of the "total collectivisation" decided by the Soviet regime.

31. In 1930, the state gave orders to collect 30% of all grain produced by farms; in 1931 the quota reached 41.5% and in 1932 it was established at over 60%. Those quotas were simply impossible to meet if farmers were to continue working on the land. The state machinery began to resort to mass terror.

32. In August 1932, a so-called "three ears law" was adopted in the USSR. Under this law, anyone found guilty of stealing "Socialist property" could be sentenced to ten years in labour camps or to the death penalty. This law was extensively used in Ukraine against starving peasants and their families attempting to collect even a minor amount of foodstuff in the *kolkhoz* fields.

33. As the procurement plans were still far from being completed, the Soviet leadership designated two "extraordinary commissions", one for Ukraine (led by Molotov), another for the North Caucasus (chaired by Kaganovich) tasked to mobilise local Communist Party activists to "break the sabotage" and ensure grain procurements.

34. As a result of the activities of these "extraordinary commissions", dozens of thousands of rural communists and farmers from Ukraine and the North Caucasus were sent to the Gulag camps. However, the plans were still not met. The regime then ordered the total requisition of all grain, including seeds, and of all foodstuffs, thus condemning the peasants to inevitable death.

35. Moreover, the regime introduced the so-called “black boards”: the lists of the villages which did not fulfil the grain procurement plans were published in the local newspapers; such villages were not allowed to receive any help from the outside and were doomed to die.

36. In addition, as hungry peasants were trying to leave their villages and come to cities, or to other regions of the USSR, in the hope of surviving, the regime gave orders to the local authorities and the GPU (secret police) in January 1933 that mass departures of peasants from Ukraine should be stopped by any means. The Red Army installed numerous barrages across the roads in order to catch peasants trying to escape from the famine and send them back to their villages.

37. Among the most appalling phenomena which occurred during the *Holodomor*, I should mention acts of cannibalism and corpse-eating. During my visit to Ukraine, I had an opportunity to hear the stories of several survivors of the famine who had been eye-witnesses to such phenomena. I also had the chance to consult criminal cases on cannibalism which are kept in the archives of the Ukrainian Ministry of the Interior (there are more than 1 000 such cases for Ukraine alone).

38. In my view, these terrible facts leave no doubt that the Soviet regime bears the responsibility for the deaths of millions of people in Ukraine as a result of its actions and policies, and is guilty of the crime against its own people.

39. President Yushchenko and his party, as well as some other parties, call *Holodomor* an act of genocide against the Ukrainians. They believe that the famine in Ukraine, contrary to the other regions of the former USSR, was a deliberately organised act of genocide aimed at physically eliminating Ukrainians as a nation. According to them, the Ukrainian peasants were starved to death not because they were peasants, but because they were Ukrainians.

40. This view has now been enshrined in the law adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament in 2006 and is the official Ukrainian position on the issue.

41. There are, however, different views in Ukraine on the causes and the political assessment of the Great Famine – both among political leaders and within the scientific community. I was able, during my visit, to hear some other opinions, including from historians whom I met.

42. I think it is not appropriate for me – or for us, the Assembly, as a forum of European politicians – to take sides in this internal dispute. Moreover, I firmly believe that politicians, both on the national and on the international level, should avoid being involved in the interpretation of historical facts of the past.

43. Still, the fact is that Ukraine was one of the main grain-growing areas of the former USSR, and its population was predominantly rural and composed of independent peasants, and that Ukraine suffered the most out of all former Soviet republics. It is also undeniable that the Ukrainian peasants suffered the most from the policies of expropriation of grain and all food products led by the Soviet authorities on the central and local levels, which resulted in the death of millions of innocent people.

### 5. Visits to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia

44. In Belarus, the issue of the Great Famine of 1932-33 is not given as much political importance as in Ukraine. In fact, Belarus, which is not a predominantly grain-producing area, suffered much less from the collectivisation, although dozens of thousands of peasants are believed to have died of hunger in the southern regions of the country.

45. Cases of cannibalism were also reported in Belarus, but on a much lower scale. No instances of blockage of villages were reported. At the same time, researchers provided me with testimonies of eye-witnesses that the administrative border with Ukraine was not closed in 1932-33 and that there were exchanges between relatives living on both sides of the border.

46. Historians of Belarus are in contact with colleagues from other ex-Soviet states in order to share archival documents, which are available in various national and regional archives.

47. There are also diverging views within the scientific community of Belarus on the scale and the causes of the Great Famine. Some consider the famine as a consequence of the agro-industrial policies of the Soviet regime, while others put forward the “class” policies of Lenin and Stalin aimed at eliminating private owners. The ethnic component of these policies is denied by all those whom I met. In addition, researchers do not seem to have to abide by political decisions taken by the authorities.

48. In general, however, the period of the famine is largely overshadowed by the tragedy of the Second World War, in which Belarus lost a quarter of its population.

49. In Kazakhstan, the issue of the Great Famine – and some of our interlocutors used the word *Golodomor* – is part of a lively debate within the scientific community, but the political power does not seem to be willing to politicise it, or to give instructions on how this issue must be qualified.

50. There are different views on the scale of the tragedy. From various researchers, we heard figures ranging from 1.4 to 1.8 million victims. According to some, the losses of the Great Famine took about 40% of the Kazakh population, which means that proportionally Kazakhstan would be the republic which suffered the most – more than Ukraine and those areas of Russia affected by the famine.

51. Some of the Kazakh scientists tend to believe that the famine was aimed at breaking the spirit of the people, and would use the word “ethnocide”, while the majority agree that the tragedy resulted from the fact that the local Bolshevik’s party leader, Goloshekin, trying to impose the new way of life on Kazakhstan, simply ignored its particularities.

52. In fact, the nature of the tragedy was different there. Kazakhstan used to be a land of nomads who travelled with their livestock. The Soviet authorities started the policy of forceful “collectivisation” of these people. They obliged them to settle down, to start growing crops, and confiscated their livestock for the benefit of industrial centres of the country. As a result, between 1932 and 1933 the livestock fell tenfold – from 40 million to 4 million.

53. Historians started working on the issue of the Great Famine in the late 1980s, and in the meantime dozens of research publications, and also a number of “fiction” books, dedicated to that period in the history of Kazakhstan, were published. There are also joint research programmes and publications involving historians and archivists from Kazakhstan and Russia.

54. My visit to the Russian North Caucasus region of Stavropol and to Moscow showed that, while the issue of the Great Famine was not given such a high political standing as in the case of Ukraine, both the scientific community and the authorities in charge of the archives were open to discussion on the past and prepared to co-operate with colleagues from other countries.

55. The Stavropol region, as part of the North Caucasus, was among those areas of Russia which suffered the most from the forceful collectivisation and the mass famine in 1932-33. At a conference with local academicians, researchers and students organised at Stavropol University, I heard many facts and examples similar to those which I had previously heard in Ukraine.

56. The area was targeted by “total collectivisation” and 44 out of 75 districts of the region were affected by mass famine in the winter of 1933. The death toll in the Stavropol region is estimated to be between 75 and 100 000. Between the 1926 and 1937 censuses, the rural population in the region dropped by about 20%.

57. The conference was also an opportunity to see that the issue of the mass famine was a matter of lively interest among researchers and students. A number of research publications on the famine have been issued by the university, as well as school books on local history.

58. The Russian historians whom I met, both in Stavropol and in Moscow, believe that there are no substantial differences between the events in Ukraine and in the grain-producing areas of Russia. The regime used the same machinery of terror and violence to pursue its policies across the USSR. Facing the failure of fulfilling grain procurement plans, the authorities chose to respond by increasing repression and violence against peasants. This repression was at its highest point from the autumn of 1932, when villages in all grain-producing regions were forced to give out their last reserves of food.

59. While visiting the archives in Moscow, I could see documents relating to the famine, including reports on cases of cannibalism in Russia, as well as January 1933 orders to stop “bread migration” in Ukraine and the Russian North Caucasus, which four weeks later were extended to the Lower Volga region of Russia. According to the Russian authorities, these documents are accessible for researchers both from Russia and abroad.

60. The Russian historians and archive researchers confirmed their co-operation with colleagues from Belarus and Kazakhstan in preparing a multi-volume publication of archive documents related to the Great Famine of 1932-33. They were also ready to co-operate with their Ukrainian colleagues on this project. In fact, such co-operation started several years ago, but the Ukrainians withdrew from it after the adoption by the Parliament of Ukraine of the law qualifying *Holodomor* as genocide against Ukrainians.

61. In Moscow, I had an opportunity to meet representatives of Memorial, a well-known Russian NGO working for the preservation of historical memory and rehabilitation of victims of political repression. In Memorial's view, the mass famine of 1932-33 was a result of cruel and inhuman "industrialisation", "collectivisation" and "dekulakisation" policies of Stalin's regime which were forcefully implemented regardless of the price in terms of human lives to be paid. It was a part of the terror chain stretching from the October revolution, the civil war and Red Terror to the political trials and the Grand Terror of the late 1930s.

62. Memorial does not believe that the Ukrainian concept of *Holodomor* – genocide – could be proven by any material evidence. They think that it is wrong to divide the victims of the same terror machinery into first-class and second-class categories according to their ethnic origin.

63. However, Memorial praised the Ukrainians for making their archives accessible, and called on the Russian authorities to continue declassifying secret documents and to make them available. They also highly appreciated the enormous work being done in Ukraine to commemorate the victims of the Great Famine.

## 6. Conclusions

64. The Great Famine in the Soviet Union was a result of the policies of the Soviet totalitarian regime led by Stalin.

65. The food shortages in grain-growing areas of the USSR, which led to mass famine and the death of millions of peasants and urban dwellers, were caused by the policy decisions taken by the highest authorities of the Soviet state and actively implemented at regional and local levels.

66. We should strongly condemn these policies and actions as crimes of the Soviet regime against its own people and crimes against humanity. We must reject any attempts to justify these deadly policies, for whatever purposes.

67. We should honour the memory of all those who perished in the unprecedented human disaster which occurred during the Great Famine in the former Soviet Union, and recognise them as victims of the deliberate crime of the totalitarian regime.

68. We should welcome all efforts aimed at revealing the historical truth, and at raising public awareness of these tragic events of the past. We believe that such efforts should unite, not divide peoples.

69. The important work already carried out in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and in particular in Ukraine, in order to ease access to archives, is to be welcomed. However, this work should be continued in order to further open up archives and facilitate access to all researchers.

70. Other Council of Europe member states should be encouraged to make their national archives more open and accessible on this issue.

71. Historians of all countries of the former USSR which suffered during the Great Famine, as well as historians from other countries, should conduct joint independent research programmes in order to establish the full, unbiased and un-politicised truth about this human tragedy, and make it public.

72. Politicians in all Council of Europe member states should abstain from any attempts to exert political influence on historians and prejudge the outcome of independent scientific research.

73. The decision by the Ukrainian authorities to establish a national day of commemoration of the victims of the Great Famine (*Holodomor*) in Ukraine is to be welcomed. The authorities of other countries which also suffered should be encouraged to do the same with regard to their own victims.

74. The authorities of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine should agree on joint activities aimed at commemorating victims of the Great Famine, regardless of their nationality.

## Appendix 1 – Comments from the Parliament of Kazakhstan

### On the mass famine in Kazakhstan in the 1930s

The mass famine of the 1930s brought misery and sufferings across many regions of the former USSR including Kazakhstan. It was an awful disaster following forced collectivisation and the bad harvest of 1932. The famine was a result of sweeping industrialisation policy, the coercive collectivisation and forced grain requisitioning that destroyed agriculture.

### Reasons

The resolutions of the 15th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (in December 1927) were aimed at mass collectivisation of the peasantry. At the same time it was obvious that the main objective was "to gradually consolidate small rural households into large-scale peasant farms supporting and encouraging socialised agricultural work".[1]

The reasons behind the tragic events referred to in Soviet history as "mistakes and excess" were non-contingent. Yet according to historians, it was a natural, if not fatal, phenomenon as the use of force was spontaneous. As it was rooted in the contradictions between political and ideological means and economic imperatives, a violation of the law and human factor. Therefore, the mistakes and excess were an objective reflection of the Stalinist society.

Nevertheless, some historians still believe that Joseph Stalin and his aides were purportedly unaware of the real situation and the scope of disaster in the steppe.

However, the official documents suggest otherwise. First of all, there was an official governmental note signed (in May 1932) by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Kazakhstan, U. Issayev, which contained an approximate account of what had happened. The Secretary of the Western-Siberian Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, R. Eikhe, and the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Uzbekistan, Y. Akhunbabayev, also informed Moscow of the famine and resettlement across Kazakhstan (it seems to be true, since western Siberia and Uzbekistan accepted a great portion of the migrating people from Kazakhstan and it was the duty of R. Eikhe and Y. Akhunbabayev to notify the Moscow authorities and Joseph Stalin of the situation).

In this context, it is worth mentioning an episode with V. Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, who was concerned about the mass resettlement from western Kazakhstan. F. Golovoshchekin, the First Secretary of the Kazakh Regional Committee, explained that migration was caused by conflicts with class enemies. However, he was aware that the mass movements were stirred up due to hardships and not due to the change in the way of life.

### Course of events

The collectivisation devastated the Kazakh *auls* and deprived the majority of them of their cattle. The agricultural economy of Kazakhstan suffered a devastating blow that diminished the productive power and structure of the Kazakh *auls*.

A letter from Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Turar Ryskulov,[2] to Joseph Stalin provided convincing evidence of the famine in the 1930s in Kazakhstan. It said: "According to the latest estimates, 40 000 Kazakhs reside in the Middle Volga, 100 000 in Kyrgyzstan, 50 000 in western Siberia, 20 000 in Kara-Kalpak region, and 30 000 in Central Asia. The Kazakhs also migrated to such remote areas as Kalmykia, Tajikistan, the Northern region, etc. A part of the population led by *bais* (rich landowners) moved to western China. It was the first time when the Kazakh people migrated from the central regions of the

1. Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the resolutions, p. 261.
2. Turar Ryskulovich Ryskulov (1894-1943?) was member of the party from September 1917. Turar Ryskulov was elected Chairman of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee in January 1920, and later appointed Deputy People's Commissar for Nationalities Affairs of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. In the autumn of 1922 he was named the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissar of the Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republic, and from February 1924 worked at the Executive Committee and was its representative in Mongolia. From May 1926 till May 1937 he was Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. Turar Ryskulov was wrongfully arrested and executed.

Mr Ryskulov wrote to Joseph Stalin twice in 29 September 1932 and 9 March 1933. Below you can find extracts from his letter of 9 March 1933 to Stalin.

country. It was not mere nomadic migration that usually takes place in summer, yet was the flight of starving people looking for food. In some of the regions the number of migrants made up 40% to 50% of the total population. The worst results of the migration are starvation and epidemics which have been spreading since early 1932. Last spring many Kazakh people died from hunger and pandemic diseases. It is getting worse as spring is coming …".

According to the report of the Moscow Red Cross on Aktyubinsk region, the Kazakhs residing in the Turgaisky district suffered from starvation and epidemics. They ate garbage, roots of wild plants and rodents.

According to the local authorities, 20% to 30% of the population in the Turgaisky and Batpakarinsky districts perished and those who survived migrated. The Chelkarsky district lost 30% to 35% of its population. Chairman of the Executive Committee T. Ivanov made a report at the regional Congress of Soviets (in July 1932), according to which, the population of the Aktyubinsk region declined from 1 012 500 people in 1930 to 725 800 people or 71% in 1932. According to the Chairman of the Kzyl-Orda District Executive Committee, only 15% to 20% of the population survived. The population of the Balkhash district was 60 000 people. Half of the population of the Karatalsky district died last winter due to forced migration of three Kazakh *auls*. Some 569 people died from hunger from December 1932 to 10 January 1933 in the same region. Some 300 dead bodies were found at the Ushtobe train station, in Karatal and a rice collective farm. The number of farms in the Chubartausky district decreased from 5 300 in 1931 to 1 941 in 1933.

**Aftermath**

The aftermath of the mass famine was horrible. Without their cattle, the nomads lost their traditional food intake. Fishery and hunting did not help. There was no bread due to a bad harvest. Moreover, most of the Kazakhs had no opportunity to flee from the disaster area. Without horses and camels starving nomads could hardly travel long distances. The Great Steppe became a trap for those Kazakhs who had no cattle.

Driven by poverty, people flooded cities, settlements, stations and villages with a single purpose to survive. The places of mass migration saw outbreaks of typhoid fever that was previously unknown to inhabitants of the steppe. No immunity to unknown diseases and poor (or the lack of) health care services resulted in people starving to death.

The native population severely suffered because of mass migration. One fourth of the total population, or 1 030 000 people left Kazakhstan in the years of mass famine. Only 414 000 returned to Kazakhstan afterwards, whereas 616 000 preferred to stay abroad. According to experts, 200 000 of those who stayed abroad settled in China, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. The census data showed that the number of Kazakh people residing in the neighbouring countries increased from 314 000 people in 1926 to 794 000 people in 1939.[3] Throughout 1926-39, owing to migration, the number of Kazakhs in Russia increased 2.3 fold, in Uzbekistan – 1.7 fold, in Turkmenistan – 6 fold, in Tajikistan – 7 fold, in Kyrgyzstan – 10 fold.[4]

The famine, epidemics and mass migration dramatically affected the demographic processes in Kazakhstan in its initial stages. Due to the fact that it happened during the first stage of the demographic evolution in Kazakhstan, its native population managed to quickly overcome the aftermath of this tragedy. And only thanks to the demographic boom (approximately in 1962) during the post-war period did the Kazakhs restore the losses. The previous population size was restored only forty years later in 1969. If it were not for the demographic boom, it would have taken at least a hundred or even a hundred and twenty years to overcome the population crisis. In spite of everything, the famine will be remembered in the upcoming one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy years.

Modern history offers a wide range of assessments in terms of casualties as a result of the mass famine in Kazakhstan in 1932-33. According to the 1926 census, the native population of Kazakhstan was 3 628 000 people.[5] However, twelve years later in 1939, this figure declined by 1 321 000 people or 36.7%.[6] Historians themselves believe that this figure is an underestimate and needs to be amended after a careful analysis.[7] Thanks to such analysis the researchers found out that in the mid-1930s the native population numbered about 4 120 000 people.[8]

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3. M. B. Tatimov, *Chronicles in figures* (in Kazakh), Alma-Ata, 1969, pp. 79-80.
4. Ibid., p. 80. Today, there are about 10 million Kazakhs all over the world. The largest community is in China (1 070 000 people), Mongolia (137 000), Turkey (120 000), Afghanistan (20 000), Iran (10 000), Germany (550 people), France (510 people), Sweden (200 people), the Netherlands (120 people), the USA (100 people), England (60 people), etc.
5. The 1926 All-Soviet Union census, Volume 8, Part 1, Moscow, 1928.
6. M. B. Tatimov, *Social dependence of the demographic processes*, Alma-Ata, 1989, p. 122.

On the basis of the foregoing it can be said that during the tragedy Kazakhstan lost more than 2 million people.[9]

Given that in the 1920s[10] the mortality rate in Kazakhstan was 25 per 1 000 people, the number of people who died of natural causes throughout 1931-33 should have amounted to approximately 250 000 people (7%). On the basis of this data historians estimate that 1 750 000 people or 42% of the population died of starvation and accompanying diseases.[11]

The issue of the number of victims of the mass famine is still open. The data of the 1937 All-Soviet Union census also known as “the census of the repression”, conducted in one day, will shed light on the greatest demographic catastrophe in the history of Kazakhstan caused by Stalin’s policy. Those responsible for the census were arrested or executed (the system got rid of the witnesses). For many years, the 1937 census data were considered to be lost. However, they were recently rediscovered in the Central State Economic Archive of the former USSR.

The people of Kazakhstan honour the memory of the victims of the famine, and condemn the regime that disregarded human life in order to achieve ambitious economic and political goals. Therefore, we should continue comprehensive research into this tragedy.

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7. Idem.
8. A. Galiyev, *The famine in Kazakhstan in 1932-1933*, No. 11, Zarya, 1989, p. 13; M. B. Tatimov, *Social dependence of the demographic processes*, Alma-Ata, 1989, p. 124.
9. M. B. Tatimov, *Social dependence of the demographic processes*, Alma-Ata, 1989, p. 124.
10. *Natural migration of the population of the USSR in 1925*, Moscow, 1926, p. 40.
11. Z. B. Abylkhozhin, M. K. Kozybayev and M. B. Tatimov, *The Kazakh tragedy. Questions of history*, No. 7, 1989, p. 18 (M. Tatimov’s estimations).

## Appendix 2 – Comments from the parliamentary delegation of Moldova

### The famine in Moldova – A historical perspective

Information prepared under the supervision of Mrs Ana Guţu

Head of the Moldovan delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly

### A. The 1932-33 famine in the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (the current territory of Transnistria)

Soviet power was finally established in Transnistria in early 1923. Hitherto, there had been no reason to believe that the inhabitants of the left bank of the River Dniester aspired to the creation of an independent state. However, in spring 1924 the Bolshevik leadership of the Soviet Union launched the idea of such a Moldovan socialist republic. It was established by decisions of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the USSR dated July 1924 creating the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and of the Central Executive Committee of Ukraine of 12 October 1924 making the region an autonomous republic of Soviet Ukraine.

The Soviet authorities then started to impose policies aimed at reducing national awareness and industrialising and collectivising Transnistria, at great human cost.

During the 1920s, following the devastation caused by war and the political anarchy that the Bolsheviks brought in their wake, the economy of Transnistria's various districts faced numerous difficulties. Agriculture, the main branch of the economy, was in very bad straits. The area devoted to cereals and the number of livestock had halved since 1913. Yet despite these difficulties, the authorities organised a campaign to collect cereals and implemented collectivisation plans. This was also the background to the campaign to dispossess well-off peasants – *kulaks* in Soviet terminology. In the year 1929-30, over 3 000 peasant households were declared to be *kulaks*, their wealth was confiscated and the owners were deported. The anti-peasant campaign reached its climax in 1932, by which time whole villages had been destroyed both physically and in spirit. A majority of all peasant households were affected by the next wave of the grain collection policy. The situation was made still worse by natural disasters. In the spring, the River Dniester flooded. Nearly a thousand peasant families remained homeless and more than 10 000 families were deprived of their means of existence. The summer and autumn were dry, followed by torrential rain. The result was that Transnistria experienced a period of terrible famine, reaching a peak in 1932-33, when nearly 20 000 people died.

The enforced collectivisation, coupled with the famine, led to an exodus of peasants to Romania, by swimming across the Dniester. The Soviet authorities responded by strengthening the borders and massacring those who tried to cross them. World public opinion was shocked by the cruelty of the border guards. On the night of 22-23 February 1932 they opened fire on 60 peasants, 40 of whom died on the ice of the river as they tried to cross it. The next day, about 100 villagers from the Tighina district were killed for the same reason. Nevertheless, the numbers wishing to leave the autonomous republic continued to rise and some 20 000 persons succeeded in finding refuge in Romania.

### B. The 1946-1947 famine in Bessarabia

The occupation of Bessarabia in 1940 and its reoccupation by the Soviet authorities in 1944 marked a black period in the history of this Romanian province. The Soviet authorities established a totalitarian and anti-national regime in the province, characterised by robbery and terror. Immediately following the Second World War and during the first years of Soviet occupation – the years 1946 and 1947 – the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, established on 2 August 1940, was devastated by a famine that was unprecedented in the country's history.

*The causes of 1946-1947 famine*

The justification for the famine in Soviet literature tried, with no supporting evidence, to explain the famine in two ways:

– as a consequence of fascist occupation;

– as being provoked by the state of ruin and terrible drought of 1945-46.

These ideas appeared in a number of contemporary reports, such as that of the interior minister in Chişinău, Tutuşkin, sent to his chief in Moscow, which stated that as a result of the Romanian occupation and the drought of 1945 to 1946, the food situation in the Soviet republic was extremely difficult.

The reality: documentation shows that the 1945-1946 famine was a serious consequence of the inhumane and criminal actions of the Stalinist regime, party officials and the state.

According to documentary and eye-witness evidence:

– During the years 1944 to 1949, the Central Committee of the Moldovan Communist Party and the Soviet republic's Committee of Ministers, under pressure from the Moldovan Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the entire Soviet Union, issued about 100 instructions to local bodies requiring peasants to deliver agricultural products to the state. In other words, these institutions organised the compulsory delivery to the state of the minimal quantity of agricultural products available to peasant households in this unprecedented drought. Officials confiscated all the agricultural products in the Moldovan villages, down to the last grain of wheat. The press of that era abounded with triumphalist reports of the delivery of hundreds of tons of cereals to the state, and the overachievement of collection plans. In practice, the teams of activists collected all these agricultural products without taking account of peasants' own food needs for the purposes of survival.

– For the party, the five-year plans had to be fulfilled, even if this was to the detriment of the population. Achieving these plans with the aid of unreasonable objectives was the main aim of the Soviet authorities. There was even encouragement to exceed the plans. Thus in conditions where people were dying of hunger, in 1946 the planned output of butter was exceeded by 33.2%, of oil by 39.5 %, of meat by 32.5% and of conserves by 101.9%. These food products came from foodstuffs acquired from peasants and the Soviet Union's wheat exports.

During the months and years when the Moldovan people were dying of hunger, Stalin exported 1.7 million tonnes of cereals to other countries – trucks laden with foodstuffs were sent to the other socialist countries, particularly East Germany, for propaganda reasons.

*The consequences of the famine*

Dystrophy – the lack of food or sustenance, as people were reduced to eating leaves, hogweed, amaranth and so on, led to a rapid increase in the number of cases of dystrophy. According to the (incomplete) information collected by the health authorities, 53 000 persons in the republic were registered with dystrophy on 25 December 1946, and this rose to 190 000 on 1 February 1947 and 238 000 by 1 March. Steps were taken to reduce the ravages of this disease, but the results did not meet expectations. In December 1947 in several districts between a quarter and 30% of the population were affected by dystrophy; while in certain areas, notably Cimişlia district, this figure rose to 80%.

Cannibalism – the terrible reaction of starving people. A number of cases of cannibalism were recorded in various parts of Moldova in early 1946. For example, in June 1946, there were a number of cases in the villages of Alexandreşti, Recea-Slobozia and Sturzeni in Râşcani district. A senior official of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr Alexei Kosygin, was a witness to such cannibalism. He arrived in Moldova in 1947 and visited a number of villages near Chişinău, including one house where he saw a dead body that had been prepared for eating.

On 8 September 1947, the District Committee of the Communist Party of Cahul, where 10 cases of cannibalism were officially recorded between February 1946 and February 1947, prepared a document advising secretaries of district party committees on how to prevent cannibalism. According to the document, the district leadership had information on cannibalism and the use of human bodies as food in certain villages in the districts of Vulcăneşti, Taraclia, Ciadâr-Lunga, Baimaclia and, particularly, Congaz. An official told party and state leaders that on 7 and 8 February 1947 in the village of Baurci in Congaz district (currently in the Gagauz Autonomous Territorial Unit of the Republic of Moldova), he had recorded four killings for the purposes of cannibalism. According to this source, the consumption of bodies had become a frequent occurrence. There were cases of stolen bodies that had been taken to the cemetery and not buried. The muscles and limbs of several bodies found at various places in the village had been removed. In the village of Beşalma the situation was even more serious. The consumption of bodies was also common in other villages, he concluded. In January 1947, a peasant woman from the village of Tambula, in Bălţi district, killed two of her four children, a girl of six and a boy of five, with a view to eating them. A peasant in Glinjeni, in Chişcăreni district, invited a female neighbour into his house then strangled and ate her. Another peasant from the village of Cajba in Glodeni district killed his 12-year-old grandson who had come to visit and ate him. Some 39 cases of cannibalism were recorded in Moldova during the 1946-47 famine.

The human victims – undernourishment, caused by lack of normal food and the consumption of plants and other items harmful to health, such as carcasses and carrion, together with the growing number of epidemics, led to some hundred thousand deaths. These occurred particularly in the villages because the towns, where the Soviet nomenklatura lived, received more food supplies, which were taken by force from the peasants. People died in their homes and on the street from the torture of famine. Dozens of bodies were collected daily in the streets. In Chişinău, for example, according to information supplied by the republic's interior ministry to the leadership in Moscow, the militia were regularly removing from the streets between 8 and 12 bodies of peasants who had come in from the villages.

The following table illustrates the rise in mortality in the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic in the years 1946 and 1947:

| ***Month*** | ***1946*** | ***1947*** | ***Difference*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| January | 4 466 | 19 133 | 14 667 |
| February | 4 347 | 23 791 | 19 444 |
| March | 5 633 | 25 953 | 20 320 |
| April | 4 588 | 15 034 | 10 446 |
| May | 3 782 | 14 938 | 10 616 |
| June | 3 676 | 24 701 | 21 085 |
| July | 5 235 | 16 418 | 11 183 |
| August | 5 313 | 8 346 | 3 033 |
| September | 4 544 | 5 248 | 704 |
| October | 5 799 | | |
| November | 5 753 | 3 264 | 2 489 |
| December | 9 650 | | |

There is an enormous disparity between the numbers of births and deaths. For example, in the first three months of 1946, there were 9 494 births in the republic, but 14 428 deaths. In rural areas the corresponding figures were 7 845 and 12 973, in other words the number of deaths was twice the number of births. According to official figures, towards the end of 1947 the number of deaths started gradually to decline. In November, 3 264 persons died, 21.2% more than the number of births.

In 1946, the rural population of the republic fell by 447, but in 1947, following the dystrophy outbreak, there was a decline of 100 633, representing an annual loss of more than 10%. In 1947, the rural population fell by 193 900 persons. The famine also caused great loss of life in the first half of 1948. At the start of this year the number of deaths was higher than at the end of the previous one.

*The overall outcome*

The exact number of deaths is not known. However, research in recent years has shown that during the famine years of 1946-47, and in the first half of 1948, between 250 000 and 300 000 persons died of famine, with historians generally agreeing on an average figure of about 280 000, 70% of whom died from dystrophy.

Vagrancy – following the death of their parents, thousands of unprotected children roamed the villages and towns in search of food. Village orphans left for the towns in the hope of finding a loaf of bread. In the first half of 1946 alone, about 1 500 homeless children were brought into militia posts.

Emigration – the famine in Bessarabia provided an impetus for emigration and several cases were recorded of persons attempting to leave for Romania. Their fate varied. Some emigrants were shot by Soviet border guards. A few hundred persons succeeded in crossing the Romanian frontier but others were arrested during their attempted crossing. For example, 37 persons were arrested in August 1946, 49 in September, 46 in December and 63 in January 1947. Certain persons who wished to flee to Romania were placed under surveillance.

**C. Conclusions**

It was not the drought that caused the disaster – they occur in Moldova from time to time without leading to widespread cannibalism – but the methods applied by the Stalinist authorities, with their wish to build a "contented" future with no regard for the price that had to be paid. The Bessarabian peasants were quite deliberately condemned to suffer famine for two reasons:

– they were seen as class enemies. The misleading term *kulak,* or well-off peasant, was coined to describe industrious members of that group. They were then subjected to heavy taxation and condemned to extermination, which included their physical extermination.

– they were treated as ethnic Romanians, and thus as traitors and allies of Nazi Germany. The Romanian peasantry of Moldova was treated with hostility because it was deemed to be an ally of Hitler, and thus categorised as a "traitor nation". To counter any resistance and to force Bessarabian peasants to join collective farms, the authorities used the same methods as in Ukraine in 1932 and 1933. Terror by famine became an instrument for implementing the Soviet authorities' plans.

Ukraine has succeeded in obtaining the support of the international community for designating the tragic events of 1932-33 as genocide. The Republic of Moldova must follow Ukraine's example.

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## Appendix 3 – Comments from the parliamentary delegation of Ukraine

### Information of the Our Ukraine faction about its position on Holodomor in Ukraine in 1932-33

In 1917, after the February Revolution in Russia, Lenin stated in the magazine *Prosvechenie*, published in November 1917, that only the nationalisation of all products would give the Bolsheviks an opportunity to control the country. They started to implement it by using ration cards. So the conclusion is that the famine was the intended way of administrating the region at the beginning of the Bolshevik rule. In order to introduce it to all territories, the Bolsheviks had to:

– destroy the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR). The Ukrainian National Republic was one of the biggest independent states that Bolsheviks occupied. It had the Ukrainian Central Rada with well-educated and freedom-loving leaders, wealthy and strong peasantry which had a high level of grain production for that time;

– destroy the Ukrainian peasants. Some 80% of all Ukrainian people were peasants. At the beginning of the 20th century Ukraine provided 90% of the Russian empire's grain exports. Ukrainian farmers harvested 42% of the world's barley and 20% of global grain. Ukrainian peasants were the backbone of the Ukrainian agriculture. The Bolsheviks understood that if they could not destroy Ukrainian peasants they would not be able to control Ukraine.

*Implementing these tasks was the main purpose of the Communist regime led by Stalin. Fighting against the above-mentioned opponents took forms such as:*

– From 1928 the Bolsheviks began to annihilate *kulaks* (wealthy peasants) and destruct the best Ukrainian farms.

– The communist regime confiscated the property of the peasants.

– In 1929, the Bolshevik government expanded total collectivisation.

– From 1929, the Bolsheviks' terror was targeted at the extermination of the Ukrainian elite. The goal was to annihilate the Ukrainian elite.

– In 1930, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was prohibited.

*The fighting resulted in:*

– A fall in crop yields.

– A fall in labour productivity.

– Excessive grain requisitions.

– Famines in 1931, 1932 and 1933.

– From January 1933 after Stalin's telegram to Ukrainian peasants, the regime collected all food products for months from farmers.

– From the end of January till June 1933, the regime killed 3 400 000 people by starvation in Ukraine.

– Further losses of 1 100 000 people were incurred by the decreased birth-rate. So during five months, 4 500 000 people, 900 000 every month, 3 000 every day were killed in Ukraine by famine. (These data were based on the latest researches of the Institute of Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.)

*The differences between Ukraine and Russia as regards Holodomor are:*

– Movement of peasants from the famine-struck territories was not prohibited in Russia while in Ukraine Stalin's decree prohibited peasants leaving the territory of the Ukrainian SSR and Kuban.

– In Russia, as in Ukraine, there was also blacklisting but only in those regions where the Ukrainian population lived. In other regions of Russia there were no such measures.

– The Russian language had benefits compared to the Ukrainian language which was oppressed. Ukrainian publications were blocked and the Ukrainian grammar was adapted to the Russian one.

– Only Russian armed GPU units and brigades isolated Ukrainian villages and entire districts from the outside world, forcing people to die from starvation.

The Consul of Italy at the time, Mr Sergio Gradenigo, stated in his book *Letters from Kharkiv* that one of the local Russian GPU chiefs was cynically saying that the "ethnographic material" needed to be transformed. It was said about the Ukrainian nation.

**Information of the Bloc of Yuliya Tymoshenko faction about its position on Holodomor in Ukraine in 1932-1933**

The *Holodomor* of 1932-1933 became one of the most tragic pages in the history of Ukraine and the genuine genocide of the Ukrainian people. It is the tragic part of Ukraine's history and we must tell the truth about the history of our state. Millions of human souls destroyed by the artificial famine yell for memory and justice.

The *Holodomor* above all entailed enormous human losses, and the purposeful physical extermination of our nation for political purposes. It was an attempt to convert the Ukrainian nation into a nation of slaves of the totalitarian system.

Today, this tragedy is too politicised in Ukraine. Regrettably, the issues of national memory and uniting the nation are a focus of short-term party interests. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian people continue to be the instrument of the public relations campaigns of some politicians, which is inadmissible and only confirms their cynicism.

Two positions were formed in Ukraine and beyond its frontiers in connection with the mass famine in 1932-33. One position classifies *Holodomor* as genocide, and the other one is only limited to the recognition of the fact of famine. The recognition of *Holodomor* as genocide is greatly influenced by the geopolitical factor. After Ukraine raised this issue at the international level, the Russian Federation denied the anti-Ukrainian nature of *Holodomor*. All this resulted in political speculations inside Ukraine as well.

However, after a careful study and analysis of provisions of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, we draw a single conclusion – genocide was applied against the Ukrainian people and *Holodomor* became the means of its realisation. In fact the artificial conditions were created and they were directed at the complete or partial physical extermination of Ukrainians as a nation and a people.

We ask the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and to those countries which have not yet done so to recognise the *Holodomor* of 1932-33 as genocide of the Ukrainian people. Adoption of the appropriate PACE resolution condemning this crime corresponds to the Assembly's position on condemning crimes committed by totalitarian regimes, in particular, violations of fundamental human rights, one of which is the right to life, and complies with the spirit and principles of the previous PACE Resolutions 1096 (1996) and 1481 (2006).

We stand for the impartial investigation of *Holodomor* issues and the publication of its results, which is not directed against any third party. We hope for an unbiased PACE report which is caused, above all, by the necessity of restoring the historical truth, commemorating the victims of *Holodomor* and avoiding similar terrible crimes in the future.

We hope to spread information about the tragedy, at both European and global levels, which given its terrible consequences remains a dark stain on Europe's history.

This will allow the international community not only to draw conclusions in connection with the events which took place in Ukraine during Stalin's totalitarian regime but will ensure that similar catastrophes never occur.

**Statement by the Party of Regions of Ukraine concerning the artificial famine in the Soviet Republic of Ukraine in 1932-33 (Holodomor)**

– The Party of Regions strongly condemns *Holodomor* as a terrible crime of the totalitarian Soviet regime against the Ukrainian people and other nations of the former Soviet Union, as well as a crime against humanity, which resulted in the death of millions of innocent people.

– We call upon the international community to honour the memory of the victims of the famine in Ukraine and in other countries, as this knowledge will help to avoid similar human catastrophes in the future, strengthen effectiveness of the rule of law and enhance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

– The Party of Regions thanks the international community for the efforts to raise public awareness of the *Holodomor* worldwide and praises the deep sympathy and balanced approach by the international community to the problem, expressed, among others, in the following international documents:

– Resolution of the European Parliament of 23 October 2008 on the commemoration of the *Holodomor*, the Ukrainian artificial famine (1932-33);

– Resolution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly of 3 July 2008 on the *Holodomor* of 1932-33 in Ukraine;

– UNESCO resolution on remembrance of victims of the Great Famine (*Holodomor*) in Ukraine, 1 November 2007;

– Joint Statement on the Great Famine of 1932-33 in Ukraine (*Holodomor*) on Monday, 10 November 2003 at the United Nations.

The Party of Regions strongly affiliates itself with the position expressed by the European Union that the *Holodomor* was “an appalling crime against the Ukrainian people, and against humanity”.

We also adhere to the statement by the European Parliament that “European integration has been based on a readiness to come to terms with the tragic history of the 20th century and a recognition that reconciliation with a difficult history does not denote any sense of collective guilt, but forms a stable basis for the construction of a common European future founded on common values and a shared and interdependent future”.

At the same time, the Party of Regions expresses its opinion that any interpretation of the events of 1932-33 in Ukraine should conform to existing international law. It admits that the interpretation of the *Holodomor* events as a genocide committed against the Ukrainian nation does not meet fully the criteria established for the crime of genocide by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948, which is ratified by 140 nations.

In particular, the convention defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

*a.* Killing members of the group;

*b.* Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

*c.* Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

*d.* Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

*e.* Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

The events of the mass famine that occurred in Ukraine in the years 1932-33 do not conform to this definition of genocide as the latter is contradicted by the following historical facts:

– The policy of food requisitions was planned and enforced by central governments in Kiev and Moscow as well as practically executed by local administrations and affected the Ukrainian peasantry only as a political and economic stratum or as a “political class” that was a part of the Ukrainian society;

– Requisitions and other restrictive and repressive measures were executed as means of the forced collectivisation policy that was performed on the territory of the entire Soviet Union;

– Millions of people were devastated or otherwise severely suffered from the policy of collectivisation and food requisitions in Kazakhstan and Russia, dozens of thousands in Belarus and other republics. The death toll was paid by Ukrainians, Russians, Kazakhs, Belarusians, Jews, Greeks, Moldovans, and many other ethnic groups;

– As reported, those areas most affected by the famine also suffered from severe epidemics of typhus and malaria;

– Food requisitions and other enforced measures were executed according to the Marxist and Leninist theory of the class struggle and in the framework of the official collectivisation policy and thus not as a repressive policy aimed exclusively against the Ukrainian nation;

– No evidence proves that the official policy of the government that caused the famine was based on ethnic grounds, moreover, its local executioners were, for the most part, Ukrainians themselves.

Taking into account the above-mentioned, the Party of Regions appeals for an international, comprehensive and non-politicised historic research of the 1932-33 famine in Ukraine.

As this immense tragedy afflicted many nations that composed the USSR of that time we appeal also for common measures in the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) aimed at commemorating the victims of those tragic events.

The Party of Regions strongly condemns all attempts to enforce criminal or administrative liability for the denial to acknowledge the *Holodomor* as genocide as stated by President Yushchenko. We believe that such measures are incompatible with the basic principles of the freedom of speech, democracy, and with the principles of free, unhindered research.

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*Reporting committee:* Political Affairs Committee

*Reference to committee:* Doc. 11512, Reference 3423 of 14 April 2008 and Doc. 11542, Reference 3435 of 18 April 2008

*Draft resolution* unanimously adopted by the committee on 15 December 2009

*Members of the committee*: Mr Göran **Lindblad** (Chairman), Mr David **Wilshire** (Vice-Chairman), Mr Björn Von Sydow (Vice-Chairman) (alternate: Mrs Kerstin **Lundgren**), Mrs Fátima Aburto Baselga, Mr Francis Agius (alternate: Mr Joseph **Debono Grech**), Mr Alexander Babakov (alternate: Mr Sergey **Markov**), Mr Viorel Badea, Mr Denis **Badré**, Mr Andris Bērzinš, Mr Mevlüt **Çavuşoğlu**, Mr Lorenzo Cesa, Mr Titus **Corlăţean**, Ms Anna **Čurdová**, Mr Rick **Daems**, Mrs Maria Damanaki (Mr Konstantinos **Vrettos**), Mr Dumitru Diacov, Mr Pol van den Driessche, Ms Josette Durrieu, Mr Frank Fahey, Mr Piero **Fassino**, Mr György **Frunda**, Mr Jean-Charles Gardetto, Mr Marco Gatti, Mr Andreas **Gross**, Mr Michael **Hancock**, Mr Davit **Harutyunyan**, Mr Norbert **Haupert**, Mr Joachim Hörster, Mrs Sinikka **Hurskainen**, Mr Tadeusz **Iwiński**, Mr Bakir Izetbegović (alternate: Mr Mladen **Ivanić**), Mr Michael Aastrup **Jensen**, Mr Miloš Jevtić, Mrs Birgen **Keleş**, Mr Victor Kolesnikov (alternate: Mrs Olha **Herasym'yuk**), Mr Konstantin Kosachev, Mr Jean-Pierre **Kucheida**, Ms Darja Lavtižar-Bebler, Mr René van der Linden, Mr Dariusz Lipiński, Mr Gennaro Malgieri, Mr Dick **Marty**, Mr Frano Matušić, Mr Silver **Meikar**, Mr Evangelos **Meimarakis**, Mr Dragoljub Mićunović, Mr Jean-Claude Mignon, Mr Aydin Mirzazada, Mr Juan Moscoso del Prado Hernández, Ms Lilja Mósesdóttir, Mr João Bosco **Mota Amaral**, Mrs Olga Nachtmannová, Mr Gebhard Negele, Mrs Miroslava **Nemcová**, Mr Zsolt Németh, Mr Fritz Neugebauer (alternate: Mr Franz Eduard **Kühnel**), Mr Aleksandar Nikoloski, Mr Hryhoriy **Omelchenko**, Mr Maciej Orzechowski, Mr Ivan **Popescu**, Mr Christos Pourgourides, Mr John Prescott (alternate: Mr John **Austin**), Mr Gabino **Puche**, Mr Amadeu Rossell Tarradellas, Mr Ilir Rusmali, Mr Ingo Schmitt (alternate: Mr Eduard **Lintner**), Mr Predrag Sekulić, Mr Samad Seyidov, Mr Leonid **Slutsky**, Mr Rainder Steenblock, Mr Zoltán Szabó (alternate: Mr Mátyás **Eörsi**), Mr Mehmet **Tekelioğlu**, Mr Han Ten Broeke, Mr Zhivko Todorov, Lord Tomlinson (alternate: Mr Rudi **Vis**), Mr Latchezar **Toshev**, Mr Petré **Tsiskarishvili**, Mr Mihai Tudose, Mr Ilyas Umakhanov, Mr José Vera Jardim, Mr Luigi Vitali, Mr Wolfgang Wodarg, Mrs Karin S. Woldseth, Ms Gisela **Wurm**, Mr Emanuelis **Zingeris**

*Ex-officio*: Mr Tiny Kox

NB: The names of the members who took part in the meeting are printed in **bold**

*Secretariat of the committee*: Mrs Nachilo, Mr Chevtchenko, Mrs Sirtori-Milner