Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1472 (2005)[1]

Abolishing the last piece of Iron Curtain in Central Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Sixty years after the end of the Second World War, the people of the villages of Velké Slemence (Slovakia) and Mali Selmenci (Ukraine) are still experiencing on a daily basis the consequences of the 1945 agreement between the Great Powers, which cut their village in two.

2. For nearly sixty years, many families in Veľké Slemence and Mali Selmenci have been split by the national border and are unable to meet relatives who live only a few dozen yards away.

3. Fifteen years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, an uncrossable boundary – armed sentries, double fencing, barbed wire and electric alarm systems – still traverses the main street of Veľké Slemence and Mali Selmenci and people have to make a 50-mile journey to go from one part of the village to the other.

4. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that this situation is unacceptable at a time when peoples throughout Europe are increasingly united and have ever-greater freedom of movement. This situation is clearly incompatible with the objective of a Europe without dividing lines, to which the Council of Europe is committed.

5. The Assembly welcomes recent efforts by the Slovak authorities to solve the problem of Veľké Slemence and Mali Selmenci and set up a new international border crossing allowing pedestrians and cyclists to circulate between the two parts of the village.

6. It urges the competent Ukrainian authorities to respond favourably and urgently to the proposals from the Slovak authorities and to go ahead with installing a border crossing at Veľké Slemence-Mali Selmenci without further delay.

7. The Assembly calls on the Ukrainian and Slovak Parliaments to exercise parliamentary control of the establishment of a border crossing at Veľké Slemence-Mali Selmenci.

8. It appeals to the Slovak and Ukrainian authorities to consider together mutually acceptable and EU-compatible solutions for ensuring that the bilateral visa regulations and the cost of visas are not obstacles to contact between the inhabitants of Veľké Slemence and Mali Selmenci and, in general, between residents of the areas adjacent to the border between the two countries.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 25 November 2005 (see Doc. 10642, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Eörsi).