Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Propaganda and freedom of speech in Europe

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Oleksandr MEREZHKO and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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It is critically important to distinguish propaganda and freedom of speech in the Council of Europe member States. There should be a clear cut line between freedom of speech as a human right, protected by the European Convention of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights, on the one hand, and propaganda as a kind of brainwashing, which should be banned, on the other hand.

According to the jurisprudence of the Nuremberg Tribunal (Julius Streicher's trial), propaganda can be a crime against humanity, if it incites hatred and killings.

According to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, propaganda might lead to genocide and thereby propagandists can be found guilty of inciting genocide.

Some legal systems prohibit propaganda for the war of aggression.

In particular, Russian propaganda is nowadays a dangerous kind of propaganda, which has nothing to do with freedom of speech and freedom of the press in a democratic society.

Russian propaganda during the war against Ukraine constitutes a part of the hybrid war against European democracy and a serious international crime.

In view of this, it is vitally important to develop legal criteria allowing to identify propaganda which should be prohibited in the Council of Europe member States.

The Parliamentary Assembly can offer such criteria for the Council of Europe member States.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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