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## Press release

# Platform becomes partner in Estonia's European initiative toward institution for international justice for Communist crimes

**Tallinn/Prague, 25 August 2015.** Estonia's Minister of Justice Urmas Reinsalu has announced the beginning of work leading to a new institution of justice for Communist crimes. First supporters of the initiative launched on 23 August are the Ministries of Justice of 8 European countries. A working group will be established with participation of experts from the Platform of European Memory and Conscience.

Only two months after the Platform's appeal to the international community to establish a supranational institution of justice for the international crimes of Communism, a meeting of representatives of Ministries of Justice from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Georgia in Tallinn, Estonia adopted a communique calling for the establishment of such an institution and of a working group to this end.

The participants also condemned the use of symbols of totalitarianism and stressed the need of public access to archives containing information about the crimes.

*"We are truly pleased that Estonia has decided to raise the issue and to lead the initiative. The Platform will support this work the best we can,"* says Neela Winkelmann, Managing Director of the Platform. *"We are now hopeful that the surviving perpetrators of Communist crimes against humanity will face prosecution soon."*

### Attachment:

Joint Statement of the conference for the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Crimes Committed by totalitarian Regimes adopted in Tallinn on 23 August 2015

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**The Platform of European Memory and Conscience** brings together 48 public and private institutions and organisations from 13 EU Member States, Ukraine, Moldova, Iceland, Canada and the USA working in the field of coming to terms with the legacy of totalitarianism on European soil. We represent about 200,000 Europeans and over 1,100,000 North American citizens with European roots.

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The Platform of European Memory and Conscience is an interest association of legal persons founded according to the Civil Code of the Czech Republic and registered by the Municipal Court of Prague under section L, insert 58675. Id.-No.: 72559071

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## **Joint Statement of the Conference for the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes**

On this pan-European day of remembrance for victims of totalitarian regimes, we commemorate all victims of those regimes.

We must stand together against totalitarianism, no matter on what ideological basis and in whatever form it is expressed.

The education system's task is to promote historical justice and provide the younger generation with adequate knowledge about ideologically motivated genocides and crimes against humanity committed in the past, as well as their causes.

The memory of victims of totalitarian regimes compels us to condemn the display of the symbols of totalitarian regimes where they serve the attempts to justify and heroise the acts of those regimes.

All the totalitarian regimes, as the Nazi regime and the Communist regime systematically restricted people's freedoms and violated their rights, in their most extreme forms as ideologically motivated crimes against humanity. Many of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes were genocidal in their nature.

Genocide and crimes against humanity are crimes that do not expire.

Victims of totalitarian crimes have the right to justice. Unfortunately, the practice of investigating and prosecuting the crimes of Communist regimes has been insufficient and inconsistent across countries.

The basis for conciliation and building a future is justice. The competence of the existing supranational courts does not include the investigation of past crimes committed by Communist regimes and the punishing of those guilty of them. We find it necessary to investigate the possibilities of a supranational co-operation in order to give consideration to forming a special institution to investigate the crimes of totalitarian regimes including Communist regime crimes, like the crimes of the Nazi regime were condemned and the guilty parties were punished. It is important to form the expert working group to study the issue.

We find it necessary to stress that public access to archives containing information about the crimes of all totalitarian regimes must be ensured in all countries.

We call for the governments of all European countries to provide both moral and material support to the investigation of the history of totalitarian regimes thus preventing manipulation of historical facts and to the introduction of the results of those investigations.