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Press release

Wałęsa case points to a reason for failed justice after 1989

Warsaw / Prague, 22 February 2016. The spectacular confiscation of incriminating documents by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance IPN from the widow of Communist politburo member Kiszczak has demonstrated a mechanism whereby justice for the crimes of Communism in post-Communist Europe was hampered.

The reasons for the lack of prosecution of perpetrators of Communist crimes after the fall of the regime in 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe range from lack of political will, personnel continuity in the judiciary, police and prosecuting authorities to the issue of access to documents of the former secret police and repressive forces which were responsible for committing gross violations of human rights.

Official documents indicating the personal involvement of Lech Wałęsa with the secret police were kept privately for decades by his one-time Communist superior. This might point to a possible pattern whereby former perpetrators could be withholding sensitive documents from the public until today, hindering justice and enabling disinformation and blackmailing scenarios.

"We have repeatedly called upon states to provide full and unhindered access to the archives of the totalitarian dictatorships. Only an open and full access to the documents will enable the prosecution of perpetrators and re-instating justice for the crimes of the past," says Paweł Ukielski, Member of the Executive board of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience.

The Platform of European Memory and Conscience is working toward achieving international justice for the crimes of Communism - JUSTICE 2.0
See: www.memoryandconscience.eu/justice/

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The Platform of European Memory and Conscience brings together 51 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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