

Dear Partners,

As discussed, the United States is an observer to the Council of Europe and a strong supporter of its work to promote human rights and the rule of law.

We recognize the importance of the European Court of Human Rights for Russian citizens. However, allowing the Russian delegation to return to PACE free of sanctions would send a negative signal regarding our shared commitment to imposing costs on Russia over its aggression.

This negative signal would be greatly compounded if Russia's delegation includes individuals sanctioned for their role in Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, where the human rights situation continues to deteriorate.

We are concerned by Russia's recent announcement that it intends to submit a delegation to PACE that includes individuals who are subject to EU and U.S. sanctions for their involvement in the occupation of Crimea, including Leonid Slutskiy, Vladimir Kozin, Igor Lebedev, Leonid Kalashnikov, and Svetlana Zhurova.

These sanctioned individuals should not serve as parliamentarians in Europe's leading human rights organization. We urge your PACE delegation to oppose attempts to accept as a PACE parliamentarian any individual who has been sanctioned for playing a part in Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which has claimed some 13,000 lives since 2014.

We urge Slovakia to continue to use the Council of Europe to highlight Russia's ongoing violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We ask your PACE delegation to issue public statements this week calling on Russia to implement its human rights commitments as a CoE member state. Russia should release those it has unjustly imprisoned, including Ukrainian filmmaker Oleh Sentsov and the 24 Ukrainian crewmembers seized during Russia's unjustified attack on Ukrainian naval vessels in the Black Sea. We should reaffirm that Transatlantic sanctions against Russia and Russian officials will remain in place until Russia returns control of Crimea to Ukraine, withdraws its forces from the Donbas, and implements the Minsk agreements. The United States plans to release a statement this week emphasizing these points.

I would be happy to discuss these issues further with any members of your PACE delegation.

Best regards,

Aaron

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Kancelária Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky ako prevádzkovateľ v zmysle Nariadenia Európskeho parlamentu a Rady (EÚ) 2016/679 o ochrane fyzických osôb pri spracúvaní osobných údajov a o voľnom pohybe takýchto údajov („Nariadenia“) pri svojej komunikácii a činnosti spracúva v súlade s Nariadením a právnymi predpismi poskytnuté osobné údaje fyzických osôb. Podrobnejšie informácie o spracúvaní a ochrane osobných údajov sú uvedené na internetovej stránke <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/?sid=nrsr/kancelaria/ou>. V prípade otázok, týkajúcich sa spracúvania alebo ochrany osobných údajov a v prípade uplatnenia ktoréhokoľvek práva dotknutej osoby, je možné kontaktovať zodpovednú osobu prevádzkovateľa na emailovej adrese: zodpovednaosoba@nrsr.sk.

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