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ETHNOPOLITICAL STUDIES, AT THE THIRD SESSION
OF THE OSCE CONFERENCE ON RACISM,
XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION**

The problem of methodology for the issues under discussion

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In spite of its truly humanistic slogans about the coexistence of different peoples and national minorities as a single family, communist totalitarianism which Ukraine lived through in the twentieth century did in fact undermine such valuable concepts as historical truth in Ukraine. It was replaced by the ideological deception that communism was the most beautiful thing and that Europe was the eternally rotting West although, apart from the party "nomenklatura", nobody had even seen that West. We had to take their word for it. And this gave rise to mistrust, to a feeling of disgust.

Over an area covering one-sixth of the globe was asserted the cult of "the great Russian people". Languages of small minorities were suffocated by the ideological incense burned to propitiate one people and one culture, and they died out in their dozens (altogether 37 disappeared in 70 years). The history of one ruling people was foisted on the others. Historical oblivion was thus forced on the other peoples. The cult of one people was as disgraceful as Stalin's personality cult.

The Ukrainian public advocates respect for historical documents because they alone can provide the basis for all recommendations on inter-ethnic and inter-State relations, the basis for new textbooks on national history and the history of national and world literature, to which belongs a key role in the inculcation into the minds of the future and current generations of antiracist convictions, non-acceptance of national discrimination and national arrogance, which is what engenders xenophobia and intolerance.

The Ukrainian intelligentsia is for elimination of the causes that generate negative phenomena in international relations and not for ascertaining or even condemning such phenomena.

We are in favour of elucidating the causes by establishing the historical facts which give rise to negative consequences in order to prevent them. Ukrainians are not impressed by political and ideological opportunism in international relations. Opportunistic speculations (political and ideological) alone contribute to double standards, national self-conceit and superciliousness, which in their turn lead to xenophobia and racism. In a dialogue of cultures

there should be parity. It is ensured by the cultural contribution of each people to the world pool. **Imbalance in parities is not resolved by force.** We firmly believe that the desire or attempts to disregard this gives rise to various misanthropic ideologies and, at the everyday level, to xenophobia and various forms of discrimination.

Today these problems are occurring throughout the post-Soviet area. For this reason, the educational system and the mass media in Ukraine provide extensive information about the cultural traditions of the European peoples living in the neighbouring countries so as not to insult through ignorance the national sentiments of the people of the country of residence and not to provoke intolerance towards others and towards oneself. Ukraine has long had a moral precept, which is reflected in the saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". Scorn for other people's traditions obviously leads to xenophobia.

We firmly believe that this extremely serious problem can be resolved by eliminating the causes that give rise to racism, xenophobia and discrimination and not by shouting about the consequences and, from these consequences, deriving ideological and political dividends.

There are two ways of eliminating such disgraceful phenomena as racism, xenophobia and discrimination, one of which is through uniformization of traditions (by globalization). But, in our opinion, this is not possible and is politically harmful. Uniformization could of course weaken xenophobia and even racism but would also hasten total degeneration, to say nothing of spiritual impoverishment.

Today in Ukraine and especially in the newly established private educational institutions the idea of equal development of national cultures is being fostered through a system of educational measures. If Europe really wants to combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination, it should ensure equal opportunities for all ethnic groups and peoples to freely develop not only trade but also their cultures and national traditions; it should establish equal opportunities for economic and cultural life.

The feeling of a single family can be created not by uniformization but by a wise cultural policy. Europe should halt the disappearance of the languages of both small and large ethnic groups, which have endured ethnocide, genocide, forced starvation, etc. from totalitarian regimes.

The entire educational system in Ukraine operates with the motto following the great Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko: "Learn from others but don't give up what is your own".