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The text below is a statement of the Polish members of the Polish - Ukrainian Dialogue Group (Grupa Polsko-Ukraińskiego Dialogu) who warn against the possible fatal consequences of introducing the amendment to the act on the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) for the relationship between our nations and countries. The statement is available in two language versions and will be sent also to Ukrainian media.

Statement of the Polish members of the Polish - Ukrainian Dialogue Group (Grupa Polsko-Ukraińskiego Dialogu)

The amendment to the act on the Institute of National Remembrance in its present shape will have a devastating effect on the Poland-Ukraine relations. It may lead to the escalation of animosity and the deepening of the political conflict between our nations. We risk losing the good-neighbourly relations developed over the last twenty five years and a kind approach to Poland among Ukrainian society. The statute also poses a risk of diminishing the presence of employees and students from Ukraine, beneficial and important for our country. It also raises concerns as to the unalienability of civic rights of national and ethnic minorities, including the community of Polish Ukrainians. Finally, in the light of loss of solidarity of our countries and nations against the aggressive politics of Russia the security of Poland may be put into question.

The following provisions of the act raise great concerns:

1. Penalization of statements and acts which “would lessen the responsibility of actual perpetrators of crimes” against the Polish nation may lead to a total blockade of the historic dialogue with Kiev regarding the Volhynia massacre and cause that the Polish state will lawfully prosecute representatives of Ukrainian elites: politicians, historians, scholars and journalists, without whom no cooperation between our countries is possible. What is more, also those Polish and foreign researchers will be at risk who, when talking about the conflict in the years 1939–1947, point out not only to the crimes of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) perpetrated on Poles, but also the crimes of Polish formations committed on Ukrainians.

2. Juxtaposing on the same level the actions of nationalist Ukrainian organizations with the actions of the Soviet Union and the Third Reich (Article 1 Item 1a) is inappropriate. Soviet and Nazi German crimes had, both in the legal international sense and in terms of the scale of crimes, a different legal and international status, as they were organized by the states which were the institutional emanation of totalitarian regimes - nazism and communism. It raises serious doubts that only collaborations of Ukrainian nationalist

organizations are highlighted and pointed out to in the Polish legislation, not in terms of the essence of the crime, but in reference to nationality. There is an impression that the Polish state refers to Ukrainian crimes differently than to the actions (in certain cases also bearing signs of homicide, ethnic cleansing, etc.) committed by similar formations organized by other nationalities of Central Europe, as well as to the collaboration of a certain group of Poles.

3. Using the phrase “Eastern Lesser Poland” (“Małopolska Wschodnia”) in the provision referring to the crimes of Ukrainian nationalists in the years 1925–1950 (Article 2a) is ahistoric, and in international relations may be considered as treating the territory belonging to Ukraine as a part of the Polish state. Introducing that phrase to the Polish legislation contradicts the basic assumptions of the Polish Eastern policy. On the other hand, in the political sense, in Ukraine it is understood as a manifestation anti-Ukrainian rhetoric propagated by Poland.

We believe that friendly relations with the Ukrainian nation, based on mutual respect, are for Poland and its citizens absolutely crucial today. Therefore, we appeal that the conflict-triggering provisions of the act on the Institute of National Remembrance which pose a threat to such relations be corrected as soon as possible.

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