

H.E. Petr Nečas
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic
Úřad vlády České republiky
nábř. Edvarda Beneše 4
118 01 Praha 1
e-mail: posta@vlada.cz

Brussels, 24 April 2013

Dear Prime Minister Nečas,

It is with great alarm that we are following the situation in the Czech Republic, where incomprehensible developments are taking place related to the outstanding Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and its subordinate, the Security Services Archive. In only 5 years of their existence, both institutions have gained impressive international recognition for their pioneering work and high standards both on the domestic and European level - as frontrunners among similar institutions working on coming to terms with the terrible legacy of totalitarianism in Europe.

The Institutions have earned their international reputation for producing high quality publications, exhibitions and for organizing high profile conferences. The access provided to the files of the former totalitarian secret services is the most liberal worldwide and the digitalization of archival documents proceeds at an unsurpassed speed. Moreover, the Institute has been the promoter of a unique process of uniting over twenty partner institutions from 13 EU Member States in the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, which was endorsed by an overwhelming majority of the European Parliament in its *Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism of 2 April 2009* as well as by the EU Council in 2009 and 2011 and the European Commission in 2010. We have stood in close and mutually enriching cooperation with the Institute for the past five years.

We have now learned that, on 10 April 2013, the newly elected Institute Council dismissed acting Director Daniel Herman from office in the middle of his five-year term and that the entire 15-member Scientific Council of the Institute, consisting of domestic and international academic experts, resigned within two days thereupon.

We are seriously alarmed by the published concept of the newly appointed Institute management which includes:

1. The liquidation of the publications department and education activities.
2. The liquidation of the digitalization and IT department.
3. Steering the focus of the Institute away from the study of totalitarian crimes and away from the study of the Nazi occupation of 1938-1945 and focusing instead on "everyday issues" of gender, workers, etc.

We are further seriously alarmed by the fact that Zlatuše Kukánová, Director of the Security Services Archive, is to be dismissed on 25 April 2013.

For us it is evident that the proposed changes will lead to the complete destruction of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. We consider that this is an attempt to put the Institute and the Security Services Archive under political control. The European Union firmly stands on the position that all political control of archives and research institutes does not correspond to the good practices of an open society and democratic governance. These archives and such institutes are the key to attaining the true facts about some of the darkest moments of European history, and, as the Council and the European Parliament have underlined, "there can be no reconciliation without truth and remembrance." We firmly believe that the historical value of such archives and the contribution of the historical work done by the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes are of importance for the entire European Union.

As the European Parliament expressed in its 2009 resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism, among others, Europe will not be united unless it is able to form a common view of its history, recognizes Nazism, Stalinism and fascist and Communist regimes as a common legacy and brings about an honest and thorough debate on the crimes of the past century. Constant vigilance is needed to fight undemocratic, xenophobic, authoritarian and totalitarian ideas and tendencies.

What is now happening at the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Security Services Archive in the Czech Republic counters our efforts to achieve a united, democratic and prosperous Europe. Therefore we urgently appeal to you, Mr. Prime Minister, to restore the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Security Services Archive to their full functional capacity in accordance with Act No. 181/2007 Coll..

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Philipp Albrecht,
MEP Germany

Edit Bauer,
MEP Slovakia

Kinga Gál,
MEP Hungary

Elisabeth Jeggle,
MEP Germany

Sandra Kalniete
MEP Latvia

Arturs Krišjānis Kariņš,
MEP Latvia

Tunne Kelam,
MEP Estonia

Andrey Kovatchev,
MEP Bulgaria

Vytautas Landsbergis,
MEP Lithuania

Monica Luisa Macovei
MEP Romania

Marian-Jean Marinescu,
MEP Romania

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė,
MEP Lithuania

Kristiina Ojuland,
MEP Estonia

Cristian Dan Preda,
MEP Romania

Zuzana Roithová,
MEP Czech Republic

Kārlis Šadurskis,
MEP Latvia

György Schöpflin,
MEP Hungary

Werner Schulz,
MEP Germany

Csaba Sógor,
MEP Romania

Peter Stastny,
MEP Slovakia

László Surján,
MEP Hungary

Konrad Szymański,
MEP Poland

László Tőkés,
MEP Romania

Paweł Zalewski,
MEP Poland

Milan Zver,
MEP Slovenia