



Ukraine's Component in the Platform of European Memory and Conscience

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Abstract: Bringing Ukraine closer to EU membership, accelerating European integration, participating in international projects, enhancing public policy on national memory, strengthening efforts to overcome the communist totalitarian and Russian imperial past, and forming a cohesive national identity all contribute to Ukraine's integration into the pan-European humanitarian space and memory policy. The formation of European collective memory involves the participation of many international organizations, including the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, founded in 2011. The Platform facilitates frequent discussions on overcoming the communist totalitarian past in Central and Eastern European countries. Ukraine, one of the post-communist states that endured the longest period of Soviet occupation (1917–1991), is a direct participant in forming and implementing European memory policy. Six Ukrainian public organizations are members of the Platform, with the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance as the central executive body responsible for implementing state policy on national memory. This article examines the participation of Ukrainian institutions in the Platform from 2012 to 2023. It analyzes the events organized by the Platform, such as annual meetings of the Platform Members Council, international conferences and meetings, and Ukraine's involvement in these events. Two main aspects of Ukraine's informational presence in the Platform's activities are highlighted: (1) overcoming the communist totalitarian past and condemning the crimes of the Soviet government, and (2) confronting Russian aggression and condemning the crimes committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine.

Keywords: memory policy, European memory policy, public authorities, public organizations, totalitarian regime, Russian aggression.

Introduction

Ukraine is a European country with a thousand-year history and rich national traditions. It is an inseparable part of European civilization, shares a common past and present with Europe, and will certainly have a common future. After all, Ukrainian society firmly supports the country's European and Euro-Atlantic course. The irreversibility of this course is enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine, which affirms the European identity of the Ukrainian people.¹

Ukraine's movement in this direction began immediately after the restoration of state independence in 1991, but the journey has proven to be long and difficult. Today, amid the full-scale war unleashed by the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022, Ukrainians are fighting not only for their freedom and independence but also for their European future. According to British journalist and writer Luke Harding, over the past two years, the West has come to understand that Ukraine's struggle is their struggle. In his words, "Ukraine is not some distant country that was once part of the Soviet Union, but a modern, prosperous, cool European country, with a bright, European future ahead."²

The full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation has accelerated Ukraine's path toward EU membership. Moreover, granting Ukraine candidate status for EU membership on June 23, 2022, strengthens the hope of Ukrainians for a close common European future and contributes to significant changes in Ukrainian society. According to the 2022 *Report on the Implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union*,

We have implemented many important structural reforms and plan to continue to maintain the high dynamics of the European integration processes. At the moment, the task is to ensure that in 2023, the European Union takes the next historic decision – on starting negotiations on Ukraine's membership in the EU. Ukrainian society deserves a clear signal that Ukraine and the European Union continue to build a common future. We are ready to make every effort to achieve this.³

Among socially significant changes, the intensification of public policy on national memory plays a crucial role in forming national and European identities. The cooperation with European states is valuable for the implementation of this policy. Each country has chosen its own path for implementing national memory policy; however, they have also identified common points of contact manifested

¹ "Constitution of Ukraine," *Bulletin of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VVR)*, 1996, No. 30, art. 141, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80#Text>. – in Ukrainian

² "British Writer Harding: The War in Ukraine – A Story about How the World Has Changed Forever," *Ukrinform*, July 8, 2023, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3732996-britanskij-pismennik-garding-vijna-v-ukraini-istoria-pro-te-ak-svit-zminivsa-nazavzdi.html>. – in Ukrainian

³ "Report on Implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union 2022," https://eu-ua.kmu.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/report_2022_-2.pdf.

in joint international projects. A key unifying factor in forming memory policies across Europe is the shared totalitarian past experienced by many countries. For the states of Central and Eastern Europe, including Ukraine, which endured both communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes, overcoming the long communist past has been central to national memory policy over the past thirty years. At the same time, European integration processes have influenced the public policy on national memory in these countries. Meanwhile, recognizing the need for pan-European approaches to understanding the communist past has contributed to the gradual formation of a collective memory policy in Europe.

One of the first international efforts to overcome the communist past and confront Soviet ideology was the creation of the Visegrad Group on February 15, 1991. The Declaration on Cooperation signed by Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic aimed not only at the full restoration of states' independence, democracy, and freedom but also at eliminating all aspects of the totalitarian heritage in the social, economic, and cultural spheres. The member countries of this group initiated the founding of an international non-governmental organization aimed at consolidating European institutions of memory when they became EU members in 2004.

The intention to create such an organization was officially announced in April 2008 in Brussels, where public hearings on "Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes" were held. Participants called for implementing several measures to increase EU citizens' awareness of communist regimes in Europe in the twentieth century. One of these measures was establishing a dedicated institution to introduce and support European and national cultural, educational, and research projects related to the totalitarian past. The next step toward institutionalizing a European memory policy was signing the *Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism* during the international conference "European Conscience and Communism" on June 3, 2008. The declaration condemned the crimes of communist regimes as "crimes against humanity" and outlined necessary actions for the European community to foster a pan-European understanding of the totalitarian regimes that existed in twentieth-century Europe. In particular, the declaration emphasized the need to establish the *Institute of European Memory and Conscience* (to become the *European Center for the Study of Totalitarianism*), implement international scientific and educational projects, and unite and support national memory institutions that study totalitarian regimes in their respective countries.

The conference participants appealed for support to all the peoples of Europe, national governments, parliaments, and other institutions of European countries, as well as the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and other international organizations. Such support was received on April 2, 2009, when the European Parliament adopted the resolution "On European Conscience and Totalitarianism," calling in paragraph 13 for creating the Platform of European Memory and Conscience. Subsequently, the conclusions of the EU Council and the European Commission's report on the

memory of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe were published, also referencing the establishment of the Platform.^{4,5,6}

The International Visegrad Fund assumed financial obligations to support the Platform during the first three years of its activity. On October 14, 2011, in Prague, 20 national institutions from 13 EU countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Sweden) signed the agreement on the establishment of the *Platform of European Memory and Conscience* (2011). Currently, the Platform comprises 70 institutions (68 members and two candidates) representing 23 countries across Europe and North America. These include state institutions, public organizations, museums, archives, and research institutions dedicated to implementing national memory policies in their countries. The importance of creating the Platform to unify Europe and form a European collective memory is underscored by the statement of the Reconciliation of European Histories group at the European Parliament. It states this is “an important platform for cooperation to achieve the reunification of European history based on truth and remembrance.”⁷

This article aims to examine the Ukrainian component in the activities of the Platform and analyze Ukraine’s participation. Its relevance is justified by Ukraine’s accelerating European integration and the growing interest of international organizations in public policy on national memory, particularly in overcoming the communist past and condemning the crimes committed by the totalitarian regime.

Methodological Framework

The methodology of this article encompasses a range of general scientific and specific research methods. The systematic approach forms the basis for consid-

⁴ “Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of the EU,” Council of the European Union, 2950th Council meeting, Press Release, Luxembourg, June 15, 2009, <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/GAERC-15062009-press-release.pdf>.

⁵ “Council Conclusions on the Memory of the Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes in Europe,” Council of the European Union, 3096th Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg, June 9-10, 2011, www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/JHA-conclusions-10062011.pdf.

⁶ European Commission, “Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council: The Memory of the Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes in Europe,” December 22, 2010, <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Totalitarian-EN.pdf>.

⁷ “Statement of the Reconciliation of European Histories Group: On the Occasion of the Founding of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience,” Reconciliation of European Histories Group, September 29, 2011, <https://eureconciliation.wordpress.com/2011/09/29/statement-of-the-reconciliation-of-european-histories-group-on-the-occasion-of-the-founding-of-the-platform-of-european-memory-and-conscience/#more-676>.

ering the national features of memory policy in Ukraine and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It identifies common characteristics inherent in these countries and reveals the main aspects of European collective memory and the process of its formation in the 21st century. The study of scientific, regulatory, and other relevant sources of information on the research topic was conducted using methods of systematization and generalization. Comparative analysis was employed to examine the academic works of researchers addressing issues related to memory policy in Europe. The analysis of foundational documents of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, regulatory documents of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, bodies of the European Union (such as resolutions and declarations of the European Parliament, conclusions of the Council of the European Union, and reports of the European Commission), as well as legislative acts in the field of national memory policies of Ukraine and several Central and Eastern European states represented in the Platform, was performed using functional analysis, the formal legal method, and legal hermeneutics.

The institutionalization of European memory policy, along with national memory policies in Ukraine and Central and Eastern European states, was examined through structural and functional analysis. The objects of research included the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, the European Commission, various Ukrainian state and public memory institutions (such as the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, the National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide, the State Archive of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, the Liberation Movement Research Centre, and the Maidan History Preservation Foundation). Additionally, prominent memory institutions in post-socialist European countries that are members of the Platform were studied. The method of logical analysis was applied to investigate the primary activities of these institutions.

The study of the activities of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience and the participation of Ukrainian institutions in them was facilitated by methods of analysis and systematization. A holistic study of the Platform's activities and the Ukrainian institutions was conducted using the dialectical method. The method of concretization made it possible to identify specific features and interrelationships of events and consequences within the Platform's activities. The application of the principle of general communication contributed to understanding the essential features of the problem under study.

The axiological approach provided an opportunity to examine the activities of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, the bodies of the European Union, and national institutions of memory from the standpoint of recognizing generally accepted social values. Additionally, this approach contributed to uncovering the essence of national and European identity and their roles in national and European memory.

Furthermore, general scientific methods of cognition, namely induction and deduction, were also employed. Induction enabled the assessment of the effectiveness of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience and the identification of the Ukrainian component within it. The deductive method helped examine the Platform's activities, statements, and reactions to events related to memory policies addressing the communist totalitarian past and Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The use of analysis and generalization methods enabled the characterization of the main activities of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, with a clear trace of the Ukrainian component. Moreover, by applying the generalization method, the authors formulated and validated their hypotheses regarding the expansion of the Ukrainian component in European memory policy from 2012 to 2023 through the participation of Ukrainian state and public institutions in the Platform's activities.

Results

Ukrainian Institutions in the Platform of European Memory and Conscience

The Ukrainian component has been part of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience virtually since the beginning of its activities. In particular, on June 29, 2012, a meeting of the Platform Members Council elected the first two Ukrainian organizations: the Liberation Movement Research Center and the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People. Ukrainian issues have repeatedly appeared on the agenda during joint international projects, conferences, meetings, and annual sessions of the Council. Discussions have focused on two main aspects:

1. Overcoming the communist past and condemning crimes committed by the totalitarian regime
2. Confronting Russian aggression, condemning the crimes of the Russian Federation, and supporting the Ukrainian people in the full-scale war initiated by Russia against Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Currently, Ukraine is represented in the Platform by six state and public institutions whose activities are related to the sphere of national memory policy, as follows. The *Liberation Movement Research Center* is an independent scientific public organization founded in October 2002. Its main activities focus on studying "various aspects of the Ukrainian liberation movement in the twentieth century, policy on national memory, and the processes of overcoming the consequences of the totalitarian past in the countries of the former USSR, Central, and Eastern Europe."⁸

The Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people is the highest plenipotentiary representative and executive body of the Crimean Tatar people, representing the interests of Crimea and the Crimean Tatars at national and international levels. It

⁸ Liberation Movement Research Center, <https://cdvr.org.ua/about/>.

defends the right of the Crimean Tatar people to self-determination, addresses the issue of Crimea's deoccupation, and supports Crimean political prisoners and their families, among other activities. Since Russia's occupation of Crimea in 2014, the Mejlis has been located in Kyiv.⁹

The *Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance* (elected on November 5, 2014) is the central executive body, established in May 2006, responsible for implementing the state policy on the restoration and preservation of the national memory of the Ukrainian people. Its activities are directed and coordinated by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine through the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine.^{10,11}

The *National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide* (elected on November 19, 2015) was established in April 2009 (known as the National Museum "Holodomor Victims Memorial" until August 2019) as a state research, scientific, methodological, cultural, and educational institution managed by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine.¹²

The *Maidan History Preservation Foundation* (elected on November 26, 2016) was founded in June 2014. This public organization collects memories and testimonies related to the history of Euromaidan and the Revolution of Dignity. It performs information and educational projects in collaboration with other institutions of memory and honors the memory of the participants in the Revolution of Dignity.¹³

The *State Archive of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance* (elected on November 12, 2021) is a government institution managed by the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, established in December 2016. Its main task is to ensure the search, acceptance, formation, accounting, and storage of documents containing information about the repressive bodies of the communist totalitarian regime of 1917–1991, foreign special services, structures, and figures of the Ukrainian liberation movement, among others. It also ensures access to these documents and protects the right to access this information.¹⁴

⁹ Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, 2023, <https://qtmm.org/about/>.

¹⁰ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, "Resolution No. 684 'Some Issues of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance,'" November 12, 2014, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/684-2014-%D0%BF#Text>.

¹¹ Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, 2023, <https://uinp.gov.ua/>.

¹² Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, "Statute of the National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide," August 23, 2022, <https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Statut-Natsionalnoho-muzeiu-Holodomoru-henotsydu.pdf>.

¹³ Official website, <https://www.facebook.com/Fond.Maidan/>.

¹⁴ Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, "Order No. 91/372/5 'On Approval of the Regulations on the State Archive of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance,'" 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0181-19#Text>. – in Ukrainian

The Platform of European Memory and Conscience operates based on its founding documents: the Agreement on the Establishment of the Platform,¹⁵ signed on October 14, 2011, in Prague, and the Statute of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, adopted on November 5, 2019. (Until that date, the October 14, 2011 Statute was in force.) Moreover, in their activities, the members of the Platform are guided by the normative legal documents of the European Union and national normative legal acts related to memory policy.

An important aspect of Ukraine's participation in the activities of the Platform, which contributes to the country's European integration, is the establishment of bilateral agreements on cooperation between Ukrainian state authorities and memory institutions participating in the Platform. In particular, the Security Service of Ukraine signed agreements with the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation (August 3, 2009), the Czech Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Security Services Archive (December 14, 2009), and the National Memory Institute in the Slovak Republic (February 20, 2020). Furthermore, the State Archival Service of Ukraine signed agreements with the Czech Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Security Services Archive (February 4, 2020), while the State Archive of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance signed agreements with the Czech Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (February 19, 2021), the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory (December 14, 2021), and the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania (December 6, 2022).

Activities of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience in Overcoming the Communist Totalitarian Past

The main activity of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience involves educational and informational initiatives that address the issue of totalitarian regimes in Europe in the twentieth century. The expansion of the Ukrainian component within the Platform was primarily driven by changes in state policy in Ukraine following the Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014) and the subsequent accession of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance in November 2014, followed by the National Museum “Holodomor Victims Memorial” in November 2015.

In particular, the appointment of Volodymyr Vyatrovych as Director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance in March 2014, who had prior experience cooperating with the Platform as a representative of the Liberation Movement Research Center, played a key role. Furthermore, on July 9, 2014, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance regained its status as a central executive body responsible for implementing state policy on national memory in Ukraine, previously functioning as a research institute since December 2010.

¹⁵ “Agreement Establishing the Platform of European Memory and Conscience,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, 2011, www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Agreement-of-the-Platform1.pdf.

These actions received positive recognition from the Platform and were regarded as a “turn to the policy of open history.”¹⁶

Thus, the International Conference “Legacy of Totalitarianism Today” held in Prague on June 12–13, 2014, addressed the topic “The Legacy of Totalitarianism Today – Ukraine and Beyond.”¹⁷ Ukraine was represented by Mustafa Dzhemilev, head of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, Volodymyr Vyatrovych, Director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, and Andriy Kohut, coordinator of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership.

In December 2015, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, together with the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, published the Ukrainian-language reader *Lest We Forget: Memory of Totalitarianism in Europe*,¹⁸ aimed at high school students. Previously published in English, German, and French and distributed among schoolchildren across Europe, the reader contains the stories of people from 16 European countries, including Ukraine, who once experienced the horrors of totalitarian regimes. In 2015, 1,000 copies of this edition were distributed to Ukrainian secondary schools.¹⁹

Subsequently, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance continued to be active within the Platform of European Memory and Conscience framework. On February 24, 2016, the Director of the Institute, Volodymyr Vyatrovych, visited the Platform’s office and met Managing Director Nila Winkelmann to discuss further cooperation. From November 24 to 26, 2016, the Institute organized the annual meeting of the Platform Members Council in Kyiv. The main topics of discussion were decommunization in Eastern Europe and the condemnation of the crimes of the communist regime. In parallel, the decommunization process was gaining momentum in Ukraine. On April 9, 2015, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the “decommunization package of laws,” including Law No. 317-VIII of April 9, 2015, “On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and the Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols.”²⁰

¹⁶ Neela Winkelmann, “Democracy Matters. 2014 Annual Report” (Platform of European Memory and Conscience, 2015), http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/annual_report_2014_prefinal_sm3.pdf.

¹⁷ “Programme – Legacy of Totalitarianism Today,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, June 12-13, 2014, <https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/conference/2014/programme-and-audio-recordings/>.

¹⁸ Gillian Purves, ed., *Lest We Forget: Memory of Totalitarianism in Europe* (Prague, Czech Republic: Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, January 2013).

¹⁹ Neela Winkelmann, “Democracy Matters. 2016 Annual Report” (Platform of European Memory and Conscience, 2017), https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/annual_report_2016_web.pdf.

²⁰ Law of Ukraine No. 317-VIII of April 9, 2015 “On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and the Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols,” *Bulletin of the Verkhovna Rada (VVR)*, 2015, No. 26, p. 219, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19#Text>. – in Ukrainian

Speaking at a press conference in Kyiv on the topic “From Political to Legal Condemnation of Communism,” Platform President Goran Lindblad stated: “Of course, we cannot condemn everyone. But if we condemn even a few, it will send a very important signal to society. Similarly, when we draw public attention to such cases, it becomes much easier for us to talk about other crimes of communist regimes.”²¹

At the meeting, the Platform members agreed to create online resources providing information about mass graves of totalitarianism victims across Europe and Soviet camps for political prisoners. In addition, the Platform’s delegates met with representatives of Ukraine’s central state authorities, including Hanna Hopko, Head of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mykola Knyazhitsky, Head of the Rada’s Committee on Culture and Spirituality, and Yevhen Nischuk, Minister of Culture of Ukraine.²²

The Platform Members Council meeting in Kyiv coincided with the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Famines in Ukraine, and the delegates of the Platform took part in official events honoring the memory of the victims of the Holodomor-Genocide of 1932–1933. In particular, at the opening of the “Invincible” exhibition at the National Museum “Holodomor Victims Memorial,” Lindblad stated: “Now it is extremely important for us to remind people about the crimes of the totalitarian regime. Perhaps, speaking of the Ukrainian Great Famine, we are talking about one of the greatest crimes of the totalitarian system.”²³ Two years later, from November 22–24, 2018, Dr. Łukasz Kamiński, President of the Platform, attended events dedicated to the 85th anniversary of the Holodomor-Genocide of the Ukrainian people. He participated in lighting a candle of memory at an extraordinary meeting of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and at the International Forum “Ukraine Remembers, the World Acknowledges,” where issues of the legal assessment of the Holodomor-Genocide, its memorialization, and scientific research were discussed.²⁴

The next meeting of the Platform Members Council also addressed issues related to the communist regime. On November 8–9, 2017, Platform member organizations gathered in Paris for the International Conference “100 Years of Communism: History and Memory.” A separate discussion focused on “Ukraine and Communism 1917–2017.” At the conference, Ukraine was represented by

²¹ “Institute of National Remembrance Will Join the Creation of Pan-European Online Maps of Mass Graves of Victims of Totalitarianism and Soviet Camps for Political Prisoners,” *Government Portal*, November 30, 2016, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/249539567>. – in Ukrainian

²² Winkelmann, “Democracy Matters. 2016 Annual Report.”

²³ “An Exhibition about Indomitable Ukrainians during the Holodomor Was Opened in the Capital,” *Vechirniy Kyiv*, November 24, 2016, <https://vechirniy.kyiv.ua/news/9950>. – in Ukrainian

²⁴ “Platform Commemorated the 85th Anniversary of the Holodomor in Ukraine,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, November 24, 2018, www.memoryandconscience.eu/2018/11/28/platform-commemorated-the-85th-anniversary-of-the-holodomor-in-ukraine/.

Serhiy Ryabenko from the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, Anna Oliynyk from the Liberation Movement Research Centre, and Olesya Isayuk from the National Memorial Museum in Memory of the Victims of Occupation Regimes.²⁵ The conference participants adopted a memorandum calling for an official pan-European ban on the public display of communist symbols, the creation of a memorial to the victims of totalitarianism in Europe, and the establishment of an International Tribunal for Communist Crimes.²⁶

On May 27, 2019, Czech MP Pavel Žáček, who has dedicated many years to national memory policy and has repeatedly represented his state in Ukraine, initiated an international seminar titled “Hybrid Threats from the Point of View of the Czech Republic and Ukraine.” The seminar featured two member organizations of the Platform: the Liberation Movement Research Center from Ukraine and the Center for Documentation of Totalitarian Regimes from the Czech Republic.²⁷ Moreover, on October 3, 2019, the Liberation Movement Research Center, in collaboration with the Ukrainian branch of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the International Renaissance Foundation, and with the participation of the President of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, Dr. Łukasz Kamiński, held an international conference titled “How to Deal with the Past? Memory in a Post-Truth World.” The conference addressed various topics, including what national memory policy should entail, reflections on past tragedies, and the standards and responsibilities of the media in historical discussions.²⁸

Subsequently, Ukrainian representatives participated in several events organized by the Platform, most of which were held online due to COVID-19. On October 22, 2020, Roman Kulyk, a leading employee of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, presented the report “Ukraine’s Experience in the Rehabilitation of Victims of the Communist Totalitarian Regime” during an online meeting of the “Justice 2.0” project of the Platform.

Additionally, at the International Conference “Past for the Future,” held on November 16–17, 2020, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance was represented by its new head, Anton Drobovych, appointed in December 2019.

²⁵ Neela Winkelmann and Peter Rendek, “Democracy Matters. 2017 Annual Report” (Platform of European Memory and Conscience, 2018), https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/annual_report_2017_finalweb.pdf.

²⁶ “Invitation to a conference ‘100 Years of Communism. History and Memory,’ to be held on November 8-9, 2017, Paris, France,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, October 13, 2017, www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Conference-100-Years-of-Communism-programme-13.10.2017.pdf.

²⁷ “A Seminar about Hybrid Warfare, Disinformation and Ukraine in the Parliament of the Czech Republic,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, May 28, 2019, <https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/2019/05/28/a-seminar-about-hybrid-warfare-disinformation-and-ukraine-in-the-parliament-of-the-czech-republic/>.

²⁸ “‘How to Deal with the Past? Memory in a Post-Truth World’ International Conference in Kyiv, Ukraine,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, October 3, 2019, <https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/2019/10/03/how-to-deal-with-the-past-memory-in-a-post-truth-world-international-conference-in-kyiv-ukraine/>.

Conference participants discussed complex issues concerning the methods, tools, and institutions necessary to create a narrative that would unite European countries. In particular, the question “What would a joint Ukrainian-Russian history textbook look like?” was considered.²⁹

At the annual meeting of the Platform Members Council for 2020, held on January 25, 2021, the State Archive of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance was elected as a candidate for membership. It became a full member at the meeting on November 12, 2021. During this meeting, an international conference titled “1991 – A New Map of Europe” was also held. The head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, Anton Drobovych, delivered a presentation on “The Collapse of the Soviet Union: The Ukrainian View.” In 2022, the theme of the annual meeting of the Platform Members Council was determined by the full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which will be discussed below.

Activities of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience in the Context of the Russian-Ukrainian War

Since 2014, the second important area of information activity of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience has been the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Member institutions of the Platform openly support Ukrainians in their opposition to contemporary manifestations of totalitarianism, as demonstrated by the Russian Federation for nearly a decade. Presenting the leader of the Crimean Tatar people, Mustafa Dzhemilev, with the Platform’s top prize during the international conference “The Legacy of Totalitarianism in Europe” on June 12, 2014, is an indicative manifestation of support for Ukraine by the Platform members. This prize is awarded to individuals who have made particularly distinguished contributions in opposing totalitarianism in Europe, in the struggle for democratic principles and ideals, and in upholding the rights and freedoms of citizens. In 2017, Ilmi Umerov, a representative of the Crimean Tatars and Deputy Chair of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, received the prize after being sentenced to two years of imprisonment by Russian occupation authorities in Crimea in September 2017.³⁰ On this occasion, Emine Dzhaparova, the First Deputy Minister of Information Policy of Ukraine, stated:

This prize is important for us because it is a prize to the entire Crimean Tatar people. This award is a reflection of all the struggle that has been traditional for the Crimean Tatars since the time of the USSR, when, through non-violent

²⁹ “‘Past for the Future’ – an Online Conference on 16-17 November,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, November 10, 2020, www.memoryandconscience.eu/2020/11/11/past-for-the-future-an-online-conference-on-16-17-november/.

³⁰ Winkelmann and Rendek, “Democracy Matters. 2017 Annual Report.”

means, rallies, and other forms of struggle and resistance, the Crimean Tatars articulated their position against repressions, against totalitarian regimes.³¹

In 2018, the Platform awarded its prize to Ukrainian Director Oleh Sentsov, who had been sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment by Russia. The support provided by Platform members for the political prisoner of the Russian Federation, along with calls for his immediate release, has become a key informational resistance to Russian aggression and the crimes of the Russian Federation against humanity. Unfortunately, being imprisoned in Russia, Oleh Sentsov could not personally receive the prize. The Ambassador of Ukraine to the Republic of Slovenia, Mikhail Brodovych, attended the award ceremony on November 14, 2018.³²

Since 2014, the Platform has repeatedly raised the issue of the Russian war against Ukraine. On February 7, 2014, the Platform appealed to the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union with a statement addressing human rights violations and restrictions on citizens' rights and freedoms. It also called for urgent action and mediation in the conflict unfolding in Ukraine.³³ Moreover, on June 13, 2014, following the international conference "The Legacy of Totalitarianism Today" held in Prague, the Platform appealed to the governments of all EU member states, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, and the Council of Europe. It condemned the Russian aggression and stressed the need for international attention to the persecution and discrimination of Ukrainian citizens occurring in Crimea, which Russia occupied.³⁴ In 2014, summarizing the events of the year at a meeting of the Platform Members Council, the Platform President, Goran Lindblad, reported "a decrease in the quality of democracy at the international level" and addressed Russia's occupation of Crimea and its declaration of war on Ukraine.

In September 2015, as a full member of the Platform, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People once again raised the issue of protecting the rights of Ukrainian citizens in Russian-occupied Crimea before the international community. The Mejlis called for the restoration of press freedom in Crimea, allowing entry of foreign journalists and human rights defenders, cessation of administrative and criminal prosecution of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, and the release of the Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis, Akhtem Chygoz, along with all Ukrainian citizens who had been illegally detained in Russia. Supporting this position, Lindblad

³¹ "Umerov: The Prize of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience Is a Recognition of the Problems of Ukraine and the Crimean Tatar People," *Interfax-Ukraine*, November 13, 2017, <https://interfax.com.ua/news/political/461466.html>. – in Ukrainian

³² "Prize of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience 2018 Awarded in Ljubljana," Platform of European Memory and Conscience, November 14, 2018, <https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/2018/11/16/prize-of-the-platform-of-european-memory-and-conscience-2018-awarded-in-ljubljana/>.

³³ Winkelmann, "Democracy Matters. 2014 Annual Report."

³⁴ "Programme – Legacy of Totalitarianism Today."

stated: “Crimea should remain at the center of our attention, and we urge European leaders to put the rights and legitimate demands of the Crimean Tatars on the agenda of any political discussions with Russia.”³⁵

It should be emphasized that the violation of the rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens living in Russian-occupied Crimea and the repressions against them have been characteristic features of the Russian Federation’s aggressive policy toward Ukraine since February 2014. Before Russia’s full-scale armed invasion, Ukrainian political prisoners received some support from activists and lawyers who could access the peninsula from mainland Ukraine. However, after February 24, 2022, all ties were severed, and unfortunately, Ukraine’s attempts to resolve this issue through a third country were unsuccessful. As Tamila Tasheva, the Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, noted, “Now the only way to get information is to get it from the Crimean lawyers, from the families of political prisoners.”³⁶

Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine also affected the informational activities of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience (PEMC). In its statement on February 24, 2022, the Platform expressed support for the Ukrainian people and condemned the Russian invasion:

It is a crime against peace. We express our solidarity with the Ukrainian people defending their country. We condemn war crimes and atrocities [...]. We assure the Ukrainian members of the PEMC of our readiness to assist in any way we can. [...] We call all member organizations of PEMC to take an active part in protests against this criminal aggression.³⁷

This statement also referred to the responsibility for the crimes committed by Russia and the need for an international tribunal to consider them.

The Platform also raised an extremely urgent issue affecting not only Ukraine but the whole world – Russia’s information influence:

The aggression was preceded by a years-long campaign of historical disinformation against Ukraine and other Central and Eastern European countries. We regret that this warning sign was ignored by democratic societies. The criminal nature of Putin’s regime cannot be understood without analyzing its Soviet, and especially KGB, roots. The PEMC is ready to improve and continue

³⁵ Neela Winkelmann, “Democracy Matters. 2015 Annual Report” (Platform of European Memory and Conscience, 2016), http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/annual_report_2015_web.pdf.

³⁶ Oleksandra Boyko, “Russia Holds 180 Political Prisoners Arrested in Crimea or Related to Crimea – Tasheva,” *Suspilne Novini*, March 15, 2023, <https://suspilne.media/415230-politichni-vazni-rosiani-zaarestuvali-na-teritorii-okupovanogo-krimu-180-gromadan-ukraini-tamila-taseva/>. – in Ukrainian

³⁷ “Statement on Russian Aggression in Ukraine,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, February 24, 2022, <https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/2022/02/24/statement-on-russian-aggression-in-ukraine/>.

countering the actions of the Russian Federation through education and supporting its partners.³⁸

Among the first activities of the Platform against Russian disinformation, as one of the significant components of the full-scale war against Ukraine, was the publication of the reader *Lest We Forget: Memory of Totalitarianism in Europe* in English, German, and Czech for teenage schoolchildren around the world. It tells the story of Ukrainian teacher Oleksandra Radchenko, who survived the Holodomor-Genocide of 1932–1933 and ten years in Stalin's labor camps. According to the Platform's website, the release of the reader aims to support educational efforts against modern aggression conducted through the manipulation of contemporary history and directed against Ukrainian institutions of memory.³⁹

The issues of countering Russian aggression, information warfare, the falsification and mythification of history were addressed at the International Conference "Russia's Hybrid War against the Democratic World: A Challenge for European Remembrance Policy," held in Prague on November 16–18, 2022. At the conference, participants emphasized the need to strengthen collective security in the field of memory policy and to increase the resilience of memory institutions to modern challenges and threats. MP Volodymyr Vyatrovych and the Director of the Branch-Wise State Archive of the Ukrainian Security Service, Andriy Kohut, represented Ukraine at the event.⁴⁰ PEMS President Marek Mutor aptly summarized the purpose of the conference: "[...] when we forget its [history's] importance, it can be used for evil deeds. The goal of this conference is not only to analyze Russian disinformation in the field of history but to think about how it can be counteracted, not only for today but also for the future of Europe."⁴¹ Meanwhile, Jan Kalous, Director of the 21st Century Memorial Museum, emphasized: "The events in Ukraine and the undisguised aggressive policy of Putin's Russia clearly show the urgency and necessity of facing threats that have never been more topical since the end of the Cold War."

Currently, PEMC continues to represent Ukraine's interests on the international stage and brings the Ukrainian issue to the forefront within the European Union and the governments of the Platform's member states. For example, in

³⁸ "A Ukrainian Story from the Reader – Lest We Forget: Memory of Totalitarianism in Europe," Platform of European Memory and Conscience, March 2022, www.memoryandconscience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/READER_UA_2022_en.pdf.

³⁹ "The International Conference 'Russia's Hybrid War against the Democratic World: A Challenge for European Remembrance Policy,'" Platform of European Memory and Conscience, November 16-17, 2022, www.memoryandconscience.eu/conference-2022/.

⁴⁰ "International Conference 'Russia's Hybrid War against the Democratic World' to Be Held in Prague on 16-18 November 2022," Platform of European Memory and Conscience, November 15, 2022, <https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/2022/11/15/international-conference-russias-hybrid-war-against-the-democratic-world-to-be-held-in-prague-on-16-18-november-2022/>.

⁴¹ "International Conference 'Russia's Hybrid War against the Democratic World' to Be Held in Prague on 16-18 November 2022."

June 2023, at an event commemorating the victims of Soviet deportation at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Marek Mutor stated:

We consider it a success that the European Parliament has recognized the commemoration of the victims of Soviet deportations as part of its official agenda since this year. It is important for the victims, their families, but also for Europeans today who must constantly cultivate their readiness to make the effort to confront evil. After all, deportations are part of the reality of the war Russia is waging today against an independent Ukraine.⁴²

Such support from the Platform contributes to the European integration processes in Ukraine, the democratization of Ukrainian society, the formation and implementation of a public policy on national memory, the rejection of the communist totalitarian and Russian imperial past, and resistance to the modern information and armed aggression of the Russian Federation.

Discussion

The experience of European countries in formulating and implementing national memory policies, as well as the inclusion of the Ukrainian component in pan-European memory policy, are important for Ukraine. European integration processes in Ukraine began long before the creation of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, and the entry of the first Ukrainian institutions into it in 2012 contributed to the actualization of the Ukrainian issue within the transnational memory policy. On this occasion, the Chairman of the Scientific Council of the Liberation Movement Research Centre, Volodymyr Vyatrovych, noted that “Ukraine will thus remain in the horizon of European policy aimed at studying the crimes of totalitarianism, their condemnation, and prevention in the future.”⁴³

The study of European experiences in overcoming the communist totalitarian past, including the memory institutions of Central and Eastern Europe that are members of the Platform, intensified in Ukraine in the 2000s. Public organizations were the first to address issues of democratization of Ukrainian society, observance of citizens’ rights and freedoms, restoration of historical justice, and overcoming the communist past. Among them, the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group and the Liberation Movement Research Center emerged as leaders. Through their research work, these organizations paid significant attention to educational activities. As a result, a number of publications at that time analyzed state policies of European countries from the former socialist camp and some legal documents of the European Union regarding access to information.

⁴² “Platform Active in the European Parliament,” Platform of European Memory and Conscience, July 4, 2023, www.memoryandconscience.eu/2023/07/04/platform-active-in-the-european-parliament/.

⁴³ Yaroslava Muzychenko, “This Is How We Remain on the Horizon of a Europe That Remembers,” *Ukraine Moloda*, July 20, 2012, <https://umoloda.kyiv.ua/number/2110/222/75195>. – in Ukrainian

Between 2008 and 2010, the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group published several practical manuals promoting access to information in Ukraine. These manuals also covered certain aspects of this policy in EU member states. For example, *Freedom of Information in Ukraine: Improvement of Legislation and Practice*⁴⁴ includes the texts of the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states from July 13, 2000 and February 21, 2002, regarding the policy on access to archives and official documents. Additionally, *Access to Archival Documents: Legislation and Practice*⁴⁵ contains legislative acts from countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Germany, Poland, Hungary) and scholarly papers by European experts in this field.

In addition, in 2012, within the framework of the project “Access to Archives as a Right to Public Memory,” the Liberation Movement Research Center published the book *The Right to the Truth. Practical Advisor on Access to Archives*.⁴⁶ The book contains information about the legislation of Central and Eastern European countries and the official memory institutions responsible for preserving and studying documents of former communist special services in these countries. In justifying the need to open the archives, the authors define freedom of access to information as “an integral part of a democratic society” and “a criterion for measuring the level of democratic development,” while archival documents are referred to as the “main tools” for restoring historical truth and overcoming the consequences of totalitarianism.

In 2016, the Liberation Movement Research Center published the *Handbook of the European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of the Secret-Police Files* in Ukrainian, which was first published in Prague in 2013.⁴⁷ The handbook contains information about the archives of former special services of post-socialist countries (Bulgaria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia), including the legislative framework, organizational structure, archival funds and collections, and access procedures. The achievements of these organizations in ensuring access to archives and overcoming the legacy of communism contributed to the development of Ukraine’s “decommunization laws” adopted on April 9, 2015, specifically Law of Ukraine No. 316-VIII “On Access to

⁴⁴ Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, *Freedom of Information in Ukraine: Improvement of Legislation and Practice* (Kharkiv: Human Rights, 2009), <https://library.khpg.org/index.php?id=1236146361>. – in Ukrainian

⁴⁵ Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, *Access to Archival Documents: Legislation and Practice* (Kharkiv: Human Rights, 2010), <https://library.khpg.org/index.php?id=1303828265>. – in Ukrainian

⁴⁶ Volodymyr M. Vyatrovych, Igor M. Kulyk, Vita V. Loshak, and Alina V. Shpak, *The Right to the Truth: Practical Advisor on Access to Archives* (Lviv, Ukraine: Chasopys 2012), https://cdvr.org.ua/sites/default/files/archive/posibnyk_pravo_na_pravdu.pdf. – in Ukrainian

⁴⁷ Rafał Leśkiewicz, Pavel Žáček, Olesya Isaiuk, and Volodymyr Birchak, eds., *Handbook of the European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of the Secret-Police Files* (Lviv: Chasopys, 2016), <https://cdvr.org.ua/sites/default/files/archive/handbook-el.pdf>. – in Ukrainian

the Archives of the Repressive Bodies of the Communist Totalitarian Regime of 1917–1991,”⁴⁸ and Law of Ukraine No. 317-VIII “On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and the Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols.”⁴⁹

Issues of transnational memory policy in Europe and the place and role of the European Union in these processes have been studied by many researchers, including Balabanov and Karaman,⁵⁰ Büttner and Delius,⁵¹ Littoz-Monnet,⁵² Mälksoo,⁵³ Perchoc,⁵⁴ Tryma et al.,⁵⁵ Zombory,⁵⁶ Kyrýdon,⁵⁷ Troyan and Kyrýdon,⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Law of Ukraine No. 316-VIII of April 9, 2015, “On Access to the Archives of the Repressive Bodies of the Communist Totalitarian Regime of 1917–1991,” *Bulletin of the Verkhovna Rada (VVR)*, 2015, No. 26, p. 218, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/316-19#Text>.

⁴⁹ Law of Ukraine No. 317-VIII of April 9, 2015 “On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and the Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols.”

⁵⁰ Kostyantyn Balabanov and Kostyantyn Karaman, “Historical Memory in Eurosceptic Discourse,” *Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler ve Eğitim Dergisi (USBED)* 3, no. 5 (2021): 393-410, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1797607>.

⁵¹ Sebastian M. Büttner and Anna Delius, “World Culture in European Memory Politics? New European Memory Agents Between Epistemic Framing and Political Agenda Setting,” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23, no. 3 (2015): 391-404, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2015.1056116>.

⁵² Annabelle Littoz-Monnet, “The EU Politics of Remembrance: Can Europeans Remember Together?” *West European Politics* 35, no. 5 (2012): 1182-1202, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2012.706416>.

⁵³ Maria Mälksoo, “The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe,” *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 4 (2009): 653-680, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066109345049>; Maria Mälksoo, “Criminalizing Communism: Transnational Mnemopolitics in Europe,” *International Political Sociology* 8, no. 1 (March 2014): 82-99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ips.12041>; Maria Mälksoo, “A Baltic Struggle for a ‘European Memory’: The Militant Mnemopolitics of *The Soviet Story*,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 20, no. 4 (2018): 530-544, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2018.1522828>.

⁵⁴ Philippe Perchoc, “Negotiating Memory at the European Parliament After the Enlargement (2004–2009),” *European Review of International Studies* 2, no. 2 (2015): 19-39, <https://doi.org/10.3224/eris.v2i2.20678>.

⁵⁵ K.A. Tryma, O.I. Stadnichenko, and N.V. Salnikova, “Euroscepticism and the Politics of Memory: The Case of Czech Republic, Poland and Germany,” *Regional Studies* 32, no. 4 (2023): 30-36, <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6170/2023.32.4>.

⁵⁶ Máté Zombory, “The Birth of the Memory of Communism: Memorial Museums in Europe,” *Nationalities Papers* 45, no. 6 (November 2017): 1028-1046, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1339680>.

⁵⁷ Alla Kyrýdon, “‘Overcoming the Past’ in Central and Eastern Europe: Main Tendencies,” *European Historical Studies*, no. 4 (2016): 126-143, <http://doi.org/10.17721/2524-048X.2016.04.126-143>. – in Ukrainian

⁵⁸ Serhiy S. Troyan and Alla M. Kyrýdon, “‘War of Memories’ and the Search for Models of Understanding in Central and Eastern Europe,” *External Affairs* 27, no. 9 (2017): 22-25.

Makliuk,⁵⁹ Martynov,⁶⁰ Roik,⁶¹ Slyvynskiy,⁶² Frolov et al.⁶³ Some scholars, such as Neumayer,⁶⁴ focus on the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, its activities, and its role in the formation of a pan-European perception and understanding of the crimes of the communist totalitarian regime. However, the participation of Ukrainian institutions in the Platform and the representation of the Ukrainian component in its activities have not yet received comprehensive academic coverage.

Analyzing the informational and educational activities of the Platform and the representation of states in it, Neumayer⁶⁵ argues that its Central and Eastern European mobilizations have little resonance in the broader European political space. However, in her opinion, there is no doubt that, due to the Platform's activities, anti-communist issues remain on the agenda of the European Parliament. Within European memory policy, the Platform brings attention to the problems associated with overcoming the communist past and condemning the crimes of communist totalitarian regimes in Europe. As noted by Moses,⁶⁶ the Platform represents a "continued non-hierarchical connection between the Holocaust and Soviet crimes."

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- ⁵⁹ Olga M. Makliuk, "Historical Memory and the Politics of Memory in the Context of Transformation of Central and Eastern Europe," *Scientific Works of the Faculty of History of Zaporizhzhia National University* 30 (2011): 223-232. – in Ukrainian
- ⁶⁰ Andrey Martynov, "European Historical Memory: Changing the Ways of Formation and Conditions of Existence," *International Relations of Ukraine: Scientific Searches and Finds: Interdepartmental Collection of Scientific Works* 22 (2013): 281-298, <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/handle/123456789/188336>. – in Ukrainian
- ⁶¹ Natalia Roik, "Experience in Constructing Historical Memory of Reconciliation in Western and Central Europe," *Hileya. Scientific Bulletin* 156, no. 5 (2020): 343-350, <http://gileya.org/index.php?ng=library&cont=long&id=226>. – in Ukrainian
- ⁶² Ostap Slyvynskiy, "Between Living Memory and Political Conjuncture: A 'New Historical Wave' in the Slavic Literatures of Central and Eastern Europe," *Problems of Slavic Studies: Interdepartmental Scientific Collection* 67 (2018): 194-204, <https://doi.org/10.30970/sls.2018.67.2791>. – in Ukrainian
- ⁶³ Mykola O. Frolov, Olga M. Makliuk, and Stanislav S. Cherkasov, "Historical Policy and Memory Policy in the Focus of the Central Eastern European Think Tanks Research," *Zaporizhzhia Historical Review* 57, no. 5 (2021): 173-183, <https://istznu.org/index.php/journal/article/download/2358/2151>. – in Ukrainian
- ⁶⁴ Laure Neumayer, "Advocating for the Cause of the 'Victims of Communism' in the European Political Space: Memory Entrepreneurs in Interstitial Fields," *Nationalities Papers* 45, no. 6 (2017): 992-1012, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1364230>.
- ⁶⁵ Laure Neumayer, "Bridges across the Atlantic? Intertwined Anti-Communist Mobilisations in Europe and the United States after the Cold War," *Revue D'études Comparatives Est-Ouest* 51, no. 2-3 (September 2020): 151-183, <https://doi.org/10.3917/receo1.512.0151>.
- ⁶⁶ A. Dirk Moses, "Partisan History and the East European Region of Memory," in *Regions of Memory: Transnational Formations*, ed. Simon Lewis, Jeffrey Olick, Joanna Wawrzyniak, and Malgorzata Pakier (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2022), 101-138, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93705-8_5.

In the PEMC's early years, Maria Mälksoo raised the issue of the criminalization of communism as part of a common European memory policy, particularly in the context of the European Union's eastward expansion. She claimed that this created "favorable conditions for the institutionalization of the communist heritage moral assessment."⁶⁷ She also characterized the struggle for pan-European moral and political condemnation of the communist totalitarian regime and equal legal treatment of communist and Nazi crimes as a form of "recognition policy." Eastern European countries continue to play a dominant role in shaping this policy. According to Mälksoo, the creation of the Platform demonstrated a shift in emphasis from recognizing the crimes of the totalitarian communist regime in Europe as a historical issue to addressing it through criminal justice, or from a general condemnation to a more specific desire for recognition with tangible legal consequences.

According to most international institutions involved in memory policy-related activities, "to include the experience of post-communist countries in the general narrative of European history" is necessary to reunify Europe.⁶⁸ Characterizing the memory policy in these countries, Moses⁶⁹ uses the term "the East European region of memory." He draws attention to the fact that national memory institutions within the European Union propagate the narratives of "double occupation" and "double genocide" experienced by populations under both Nazi and communist totalitarian regimes in these countries. This shared perception of Nazi and communist crimes forms the basis of European collective memory. Its formation is made possible through gradual interethnic negotiations and discussions within the European Union, with the main platforms being the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the EU Council on Justice and Home Affairs. These institutions, in turn, cooperate with memory institutions representing both the governments of EU member states and civil society – the so-called "memory entrepreneurs."⁷⁰

The European course chosen by these states at the time and by Ukraine today requires the formation of a European identity within society. Considering the European integration experience, including the cooperation of Ukrainian institutions within the framework of PEMC membership is very important for Ukraine, as it helps determine effective measures to achieve this goal. In this regard, Karpchuk suggests focusing on a communication campaign in Ukraine, "emphasizing the ideas of the struggle for European values, the return to the European family,

⁶⁷ Mälksoo, "Criminalizing Communism: Transnational Mnemopolitics in Europe."

⁶⁸ "'Reconciliation of European Histories' an Informal Group of Members of the European Parliament," Reconciliation of European Histories Group, 2014, <https://eureconciliation.wordpress.com/about/>.

⁶⁹ Moses, "Partisan History and the East European Region of Memory."

⁷⁰ Aline Sierp and Jenny Wüstenberg, "Linking the Local and the Transnational: Rethinking Memory Politics in Europe," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23, no. 3 (2015): 321-329, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2015.1058244>.

the civilized choice of Ukrainians, and the final break and escape from under Russia's imperial influence."⁷¹

Moreover, Voropaeva believes that Ukraine's European orientation should become not only one of the directions in foreign policy but also a strategic vector for the internal transformation of Ukrainian society. The researcher offers several proposals for strengthening the European identity of Ukrainian citizens, among which she highlights the modernization of all spheres of life based on the European experience of post-communist countries.⁷²

European and national identities in the context of memory policy do not contradict but rather reinforce each other. Moreover, national identity is one of the conditions for developing European identity.⁷³ At the same time, it is clear that, within the European integration process in Ukraine, the formation of national and European identity should be combined with overcoming not only the communist totalitarian past but also the Russian imperial past – ultimately leading to a complete decolonization of Ukrainian society.

The activation of the national memory policy in Ukraine after the Revolution of Dignity affected its participation in the Platform of European Memory and Conscience. This contributed to the expansion of Ukraine's component within transnational memory policy, as the Platform brings together members of the European Parliament, representatives of associations of victims of totalitarian regimes, national memory institutions, and public research organizations from Europe and North America. According to Neumayer, the participants of the Platform cultivate a certain relationship that fosters mutual recognition. Thus, they construct the figures of the "victim," "hero," and "criminal" in the context of communist crimes, blending humanistic principles with political logic.⁷⁴

At the same time, it is necessary to consider the national specifics of communist totalitarian regimes, which play a key role in shaping national memory policies. For Ukraine, for example, the communist regime is associated with the genocide of the Ukrainian people – particularly the Holodomor of 1932–1933. Therefore, in confronting the communist past and condemning the criminal policies of the Soviet government, the Holodomor-Genocide of 1932–1933 is recognized as a national tragedy by Ukrainian society.

⁷¹ Nataliya Karpchuk, "European Integration of Central European Countries: Communication Dimension," *International Relations, Public Communications and Regional Studies* 3, no. 14 (October 2022): 6-17, <https://doi.org/10.29038/2524-2679-2022-03-6-17>. – in Ukrainian

⁷² Tetyana S. Voropayeva, "European Civilization Identity as a Factor for the Consolidation of Citizens of Ukraine in the Post-Colonial Age (1991–2018)," *Hileya. Scientific Bulletin* 138, no. 11 (2018): 139-146, <http://gileya.org/index.php?ng=library&cont=long&id=165>. – in Ukrainian

⁷³ Valerie Rosoux, "Mémoire(s) européenne(s)? Des limites d'un passé aseptisé et figé," in *L'Europe et ses passés douloureux*, ed. Georges Mink and Laure Neumayer (Paris: La Découverte, 2007), 222-232, <https://doi.org/10.3917/dec.mink.2007.01.0222>.

⁷⁴ Neumayer, "Advocating for the Cause of the 'Victims of Communism' in the European Political Space."

Accordingly, within the framework of transnational memory policy, it is crucial for Ukraine that the international community recognize the Holodomor of 1932–1933 as the genocide of the Ukrainian people and a crime against humanity committed by the communist regime. Currently, the Holodomor has been recognized as the genocide of the Ukrainian people by 21 of the 23 states represented in the Platform. On December 15, 2022, the European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the Soviet regime,⁷⁵ whose deliberate policies led to the deaths of millions of Ukrainians and caused significant damage to the foundations of Ukrainian society. In this resolution, the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine was officially recognized as the genocide of the Ukrainian people.

It is also important to consider the shared historical past of neighboring states, which is often highly controversial. This situation requires the development of conceptual principles for national memory policies on both sides, the creation of a shared understanding and interpretation of historical events and phenomena, and the implementation of joint projects. In general, it is essential to integrate national components into the European collective memory within the transnational relations of international organizations engaged in memory policy.

Conclusions

Public policy on national memory is of immense importance for the existence and development of nation-states in Europe. At the same time, it plays a significant role in European integration processes and influences the formation of European collective memory. In the 21st century, with the strengthening of European integration and the accession of post-socialist countries from Central and Eastern Europe to the European Union, there has been a reassessment of European history and a pan-European recognition of all historical aspects of modern Europe.

A significant role in this recognition is played by the events of the 20th century, particularly those associated with the domination of totalitarian regimes in Europe. The integration of the issues related to overcoming the communist totalitarian past into European memory policy—such as the condemnation of the crimes of communist regimes, honoring the memory of the victims of these crimes, and the development of pan-European approaches to the perception of the communist past—has contributed to the unification of international institutions and the establishment of the international non-governmental organization, the *Platform of European Memory and Conscience*.

⁷⁵ European Parliament, “European Parliament Resolution of 15 December 2022 on 90 Years after the Holodomor: Recognising the Mass Killing through Starvation as Genocide (2022/3001(RSP)),” December 15, 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doc/eo/document/TA-9-2022-0449_EN.pdf.

European integration processes in Ukraine accelerated after joining PEMC, and public institutions began implementing a national memory policy. Moreover, between 2012 and 2023, there has been a continuous expansion of the Ukrainian component in the activities of the Platform. Ukrainian issues have been repeatedly raised at the annual meetings of the Platform Members Council, as well as in international projects, conferences, and meetings organized or attended by the Platform.

They concern two important aspects for Ukraine, as follows: first, overcoming the communist totalitarian past and condemning the crimes of the communist regime and, second, opposing Russian aggression, condemning the crimes of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, and supporting the Ukrainian people. Since 2014, the Platform has repeatedly raised issues related to the violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens—mostly those of Crimean Tatars—in Crimea, which has been occupied by Russia, before the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the broader European community. After the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the Platform condemned Russian aggression and its war crimes, intensified efforts to counter Russian disinformation, and supported the Ukrainian people in their struggle for independence.

The membership of Ukrainian institutions in PEMC provides additional opportunities for European integration and positively influences the implementation of public policy on national memory in Ukraine. On the other hand, socio-political changes in Ukraine—notably the Revolution of Dignity—intensified the national memory policy and affected the representation of the Ukrainian component in the activities of the Platform.

Further cooperation between Ukraine and the Platform and other European institutions involved in memory policy is increasingly viewed through the lens of Ukraine's EU membership aspirations. This cooperation involves a set of changes in the regulatory, legal, and institutional framework of Ukraine's national memory policy, aligning it with European integration goals. Therefore, the history of Russian aggression—which poses a real threat not only to Ukraine but also to democracy globally—will be included in the European collective memory.

This article provides an overview of the representation of Ukraine in PEMC and the European information space through the activities of the Platform's members. In the future, attention should be given to studying Ukraine's representation in the international arena through participation in international organizations, the implementation of joint projects, and bilateral agreements on cooperation in the field of national memory policy.

Disclaimer

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