

Romanians Worldwide Group (RWW Group)

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PRESS RELEASE

The “SOS Danube Delta” international symposium organized by RWW Group with World Union of Free Romanians (Paris) support took place in Hague, Netherlands, November 5-7, 2004 and has focused on issues related to Ukraine’s decision to build a navigational canal in the Danube Delta at Bystroe.

Following a long line of worldwide protests, the event has underlined Romanian Diaspora’s strong opposition against Ukraine’s plans. More than 42,000 people and organizations from all around the world have expressed their protest by signing RWW Group’s online petition (www.petitiononline.com/RomDelta/).

The participants from Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, Canada, Republic of Moldova and Romania have outlined that the Bystroe issue is an international one, both from an environmental and geo-strategic perspective, having important security implications. Unfortunately, this issue is yet another problem in the region, adding more concern to an already troubled environment: Ukraine’s backlog of unresolved problems with Romania, the discrimination of the Romanian minority in Ukraine, the fragile democracy in this country, and the precarious situation in the Trans Dniestr area.

Ukraine’s repeated violation of a number of international conventions it is a party to shows not only disregard for the international community, but also a lack of proper regulatory instruments to address and resolve such issues.

The Resolution adopted at the Symposium calls on Ukraine to stop the canal’s construction in phase 2 of the project, until an international assessment performed according to international agreements would show that such a canal can be build without destroying the Danube Delta UNESCO protected Reserve.

The participants noted with deep regret that the Ukrainian delegation was unable to attend due to a brutal act of intimidation by Ukrainian police. The participants have voiced their deep worry about the developments in Ukraine, ranging from unilateral and aggressive behavior towards its Western neighbor – Romania - to acts of intimidation against Ukrainian ecologists that oppose the project.

In an interdependent and collaborative Europe, such totalitarian approaches cannot be tolerated. If Ukraine wants to be a part of Europe as it has affirmed, it must learn to act as a modern European state.

The participants have praised the efforts by Romanian and EU diplomacy to resolve the conflict according to International Law and practices. In the same time, they have urged the EU to elaborate further legislation in order to better respond to such potential challenges at its borders.