

Highlights of Mr. Klitschko's speech

43d Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Debates: russian federation's war against Ukraine

25.10.2022 15.00 - 16.00

<https://vmeeting.coe.int/k8/241119018248/join>

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Dear Colleagues, Friends,

My deepest gratitude to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, each of you, for standing by us in the fight against the russian federation. This is a fight against barbarians who, in the 21st century, are killing children, destroying cities and villages, torturing the civilian population and scaring the whole world with nuclear weapons.

Today, October 25, is already the ninth month of russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. And this is the eighth year since the start of the war, the annexation of parts of Ukrainian territories and taking of Ukrainian citizens' hostage.

Since February 24, this year, Europe has given shelter to about 9 million Ukrainians from the assault of invaders. As of today, some of them have already returned home, but millions will continue to live abroad due to the fear of regular shelling that takes place throughout the territory of Ukraine. I thank you for accepting our people, for strengthening them to survive.

Recently, the russian federation began to actively use not only missiles and aviation against the civilian population, but also drones, against which an additional air defense system is needed, which Ukraine is asking for. And I am asking you for it now.

Russia is not at war with the army, but with peaceful people. Russia is a terrorist country.

They want to freeze everyone. They bomb electricity-generating, heat-supplying facilities throughout Ukraine, even near the borders of the EU.

Therefore, the anti-aircraft protection of infrastructural objects of life support is crucially important for us. The frosts are ahead.

The Association of Ukrainian Cities continues its work on the release of municipal officials from russian captivity. More than 50 officials have been kidnapped since February. Five Ukrainian mayors are currently being held by the russians, and we ask for your support in their release.

After our last meeting, the Armed Forces of Ukraine liberated 669 municipalities in Kharkiv, Kherson, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions.

The liberated territories have burnt land, destroyed real estate, mutilated people who meet the Ukrainian army with flowers, tears and even kneeling.

We used to give the example of Bucha as one of the places of Russian atrocities. Now, Izium, Lyman and many other municipalities in the east and south of Ukraine have become terrible examples of war crimes.

Ukraine's losses from the war waged by Russia on our territory have increased to 127 billion dollars.

These are housing, infrastructure, and business assets.

For example, 19 airports, 110 railway stations, 315 bridges, 581 objects of critical infrastructure, including 10 power plants, 322 boiler houses, were destroyed.

We will restore all this and make it even better. In the AUC, we see three parallel paths to complete Victory.

The first is a military victory. The Armed Forces of Ukraine are our pride. They have the highest level of trust in society. In cooperation with NATO, with the democratic world, our Victory is only a matter of time.

The second direction is to restore the living conditions of citizens in Ukraine already today. This is providing them with work, a sufficient supply of products and essential goods, the work of medical institutions. Home repairs are urgently needed so that people have a place to return to. It is necessary to rebuild energy and heat supply facilities so that there is light, water, and heat in homes.

The third direction is the preparation and implementation of the large-scale recovery of Ukraine after the military Victory, under a peaceful sky.

The second and third directions, which are related to reconstruction, are already implemented today at two levels - by the central government and local governments as well.

Thanks to the Congress, we have the cooperation of European and Ukrainian municipalities.

Thank you for each village, each city, whose residents you help.

Today, the Association of Ukrainian Cities includes 385 cities and 601 villages. A total of 986 municipalities are our members.

The Association of Ukrainian Cities coordinates all issues of drafting laws both on current issues and on the strategy of rebuilding of Ukraine. We prepare draft laws and draft Government decisions, we work out government and deputy initiatives.

The Association of Ukrainian Cities is ready to be responsible for coordinating and organizing the work of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine directly within Ukraine, between all municipalities, with central authorities, with businesses, architects and designers.

I am sure that with joint efforts we will succeed in everything.

Thank you for your support, for understanding the importance of the Victory of Ukraine for the world, for the democratic future of all of us, and for helping every citizen of Ukraine!