

Dear President Martens, Dear ...

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Thank you for this rare opportunity to speak on behalf of my mother, Yulia Tymoshenko, imprisoned and tortured by Ukraine's authoritarian regime for 125 days now with no guilt. Thank you for showing your strong support for her plight and for the struggle of the people of Ukraine for their right to join European family. Thank you for not being indifferent to Ukraine, even in these hard times for Europe.

I want to dedicate my speech today to the hope of Freedom and to my mother who has become a symbol of the fight for freedom in Ukraine.

2. Even in her cell, behind three sets of bars, my mother is more free than her oppressors, because she believes in Ukraine's democratic future and its European choice. If my mother was here, she would say that, with every passing minute, Ukraine's young democracy is being systematically and cynically choked off by a regime based on fear and corruption. The fabricated show trials against leaders of opposition are used to intimidate all resistance. In the words of Ukraine's current Prime Minister: "one of the three eternal instincts - is fear, and it should work!..."

3. Ukraine's future looks bleaker with every passing day since new regime came to power two years ago. There is no more division of governmental power, all major institutions have been captured by one person, who rarely understands how to deal with his omnipotence. But understands how to feed it with ceaseless attacks on businesses, banks, property, and the strategic resources of the Ukrainian nation. Our country has become the de-facto private property of the President's family. Nobody even tries to mask the corruption of the highest levels of power. Once successful Ukrainians have been forced out of their homes to earn a living elsewhere. Almost every day we read of new murders that will never be solved. Journalists, entrepreneurs, politicians and even pensioners are trampled under the boots of militia squads attacking peaceful protests. Students, doctors, academics, civil society and opposition leaders have all become political victims of the Yanukovich KGB-like regime's brutality, who cares nothing for the consequences, being blind and deaf to the voices of the democratic world. I haven't known my country like this for the whole twenty years of its independence.

4. Judges and courts have become puppets of the so called high council of justice, which consists of people, like the head of the secret police, and Prosecutor General, directly subordinated to the President. With the rule of law banished, I am afraid there is no hope for my mother to find justice in the appeal.

5. Half of Ukrainian voters gave their votes for my mother less than two years ago. Her growing support is the reason she was sentenced for 7 years. As a result of this absurd sentence, at least twelve million Ukrainians may lose their freedom too, freedom to fulfill their Constitutional duty to vote, for the people of their choice, in the next parliamentary and presidential elections. The threat for this is real as two of the main opposition leaders are kept behind bars illegally, with absurd, discredited charges, without any legal basis. 10 cases have been opened against my mother now. Unless drastic measures are taken to save the opposition from being physically removed, our country may go back twenty years and become a one party authoritarian state on the EU's border once more.

6. My mother's health is now critical, unknown symptoms continue because she is not properly diagnosed and cared for. In the four months of her imprisonment, her trusted doctors have not been permitted to take a blood test. Even her priest is prohibited from seeing her. According to the European Convention on Human Rights this is classified as torture.

When my mother is carried by the two guards from her cell to meet me, it is because she cannot walk on her own. I fear that these tortures will continue till they finally kill her.

7. Despite of all this, I believe that so brutal and humiliating a power, one lacking all compassion, will not survive. Its own tactics of oppression is the reason why it is losing votes.

The timing is now critical. The chance for free and fair elections next year grows smaller each day. Lust for power and self-enrichment will not let Ukrainian rulers to hear the voice of democratic conscience that all true Europeans protect and nurture. When Zimbabwe's democratic opposition were beaten and imprisoned, Europe responded by denying visas to their oppressors. Perhaps, this is time to apply the same standard to Ukraine's leadership.

8. Is there any hope for Ukraine? My mother loves Ukraine and has been fighting through out her 15 year political career for Ukraine to throw off It's Soviet past. She believes, as does a majority of Ukrainians, that Ukraine still has

a chance. That it is still possible to eradicate this pattern of authoritarianism as soon as Ukraine makes real steps towards European standards and democratic values.

That is why, as Ukraine's prime minister, she launched the negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, the historical chance that is now been deliberately put under threat by Ukrainian Ruler. Today on my mother's behalf I ask you to redouble our joint efforts to bring closer Ukraine's European future. We cannot cope with this task without your help, without your trust. Ukraine's people, particularly those imprisoned for their politics, can today hold their heads a little higher in the knowledge that here, in France, the birthplace of the Rights of Man, their suffering is being heard and heeded.

9. I am proud of my mother's stoicism and political courage in the face of increasing cruel persecution. She continues her work on necessary amendments to Ukraine's Constitution. Maybe her vision of a free, just and prosperous Ukraine is idealistic, but it is a brave and passionate vision, and no more an impossible dream than the visions of Vaclav Havel, Lech Walesa, and so many others who brought half of Europe into freedom twenty years ago.

She, together with her team and allies, believe that our common mission will find success in a free Ukraine that can sit proudly beside you in the family of European nations.

10. I would like to end in my mother's words: "Somewhere behind the prison walls, the Sun is setting, but I firmly believe that soon it will rise again above my dear Ukraine and it will be the Sun of freedom, of honor and greatness of free people, which deserve a future in united and free Europe."

Thank you with your support we are not going to give up hope for FREEDOM and DEMOCRACY in my country.