Memorandum on the Protection of Family, Fatherhood, Motherhood and Morals [Yalta Memorandum]

Adopted at the International Parents Forum
12 June 2013, Yalta, Ukraine

We, the participants of the International Parents Forum gathered in Yalta (Ukraine), representing the civil society of Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Moldova, as well as family and parents organizations of our countries, **declare that** the Natural Family based on the marriage of a man and a woman and aimed at childbirth and child rearing is a unique and indispensable foundation of any human society. It is in the family where spouses find love and joy, children gain wisdom and experience they need for their adult life, and the society gets a secure basis for steadiness and prosperity. It is the family that joins generations and thus teaches people to serve each other, and in difficult times it lends protection and support for each of its members. All the countries agreed that "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State" (Art. 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Unfortunately, in these days family is facing serious threats and outright attacks. The family is endangered due to the active destruction of traditional family values and culture of child-rearing, matrimonial and parental roles, propaganda of lowering childbirth rates, contraception and abortion, divorce and sexual promiscuity, premarital and extramarital sexual relationships, prostitution and homosexuality, systematic deprivation of children of their innocence and good morals by the so-called "sexual education" programs, artificial promotion of erroneous "gender theories" that imply groundless rejection of the natural differences between the sexes and of their complementarity.

The governments of some countries calling themselves "democracies" have even adopted legislation that, desecrating justice and human nature, ignoring the will and genuine interests of their peoples, families and children, provide legal grounds for perversion and destruction of the very notion of family, by recognizing homosexual cohabitations as "families" and "marriages" and granting such couples the right to adopt children. In addition to these unprecedented acts of tyranny of the law, detrimental for childhood and directed against human nature, family and society, many of these governments persecute and oppress those who courageously raise their voices to protect family and marriage. Recently, we have all witnessed such persecution in France against those who stand for justice and genuine human rights, as well as the rights of children and families.

We are also concerned to see that freedom of believers is infringed in some countries of Europe. It is the Christians of various denominations whose rights are being infringed, and who are increasingly finding themselves forced to act contrary to their conscience, by unjust laws in particular. Some of the aggressively antireligious governments are already calling for destruction or restriction of the natural right of parents to freely give their children religious upbringing and education.

We feel anger and indignation at the fact that the most fundamental and genuine human rights, the rights of family and parents, are being destroyed under the pretext of the protection of "human rights", and the tool that has always been intended for the

society's welfare and edification is thus used to curse and destroy it. More and more often the international norms aimed at the protection of life, natural family and the rights of parents and their children, are construed in ominously wrong way, and their sense and purpose are distorted beyond recognition.

Under the pretext of protection of the so-called "sexual minorities" from discrimination, the supporters of healthy and traditional moral values are persecuted and discriminated against. On the grounds of women's rights protection women are being deprived of their right to choose family and motherhood as their main mission. Under the veil of the rights of children, which are for no good reason interpreted too loosely, children everywhere in the world are deprived of the reliable parental moral guidance and upbringing, and sometimes they are simply taken away from their families. In many countries of the world, including the countries of the participants of the Forum, representatives of the state increasingly infringe upon fundamental human rights by interfering freely with the internal affairs of a family, and cruelly take children away from their parents under various arbitrary and far-fetched pretexts. We are convinced that this is one of the most serious mass crimes of our time.

In this context, public initiatives spring up in many countries to protect the Natural family, the marriage between a man and a woman, major rights of parents, traditional family and moral values. We are convinced that the international cooperation and people's diplomacy in this sphere must develop and grow stronger, and the healthy public forces all over the world must support each other in the protection of family, society and morality.

Thereupon, on the basis of the principles that have served as a basis for all truly universal human right norms, **we solemnly reaffirm** the following provisions recognized by all the countries of the world in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948:

- that only "men and women of full age <...> have the right to marry and to found a family" (Art. 16.1);

- that "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State" (Art. 16.2);

- that "parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children» (Art. 26.3).

We declare that these provisions originate from the very nature of human beings, family and society, and do not depend on the agreement of governments and legislators but have to be always recognized and observed by everyone.

We also declare:

- that, in spite of many false "gender theories", a man and a woman are different from each other and complementary to each other, this difference in their nature and mission having a fundamental character, is related to the difference of the sexes and is not artificially constructed;

- that only a marriage between a man and a woman, which is aimed at childbirth and child rearing, really constitutes a marriage;

- that the Natural Family based on the marriage of a man and a woman and aimed at childbirth and child rearing is the only genuine model of a family, which has to be recognized and protected by the society and state, including legal protection;

- that homosexual cohabitation can never be regarded as a "marriage" or as a "family";

- that to develop normally, children need a father and a mother, as well as a genuine model of family life, therefore, their "adoption" by homosexual live-in companions is inadmissible as a cruel infringement on the genuine rights of children, and contradicts their interests;

- that children have a right, wherever possible, to live with their biological father and mother who bring them up, give advice and provide with a role model;

- that parents have a natural right to bring their children up according to their moral, pedagogical and religious believes, without any interference from state;

- that parents have an indisputable right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children, including the right to opt for home education (family education);

- that the state cannot regulate the internal life of the family and children's rearing by their parents, apart from those rare cases when this is absolutely necessary for the protection of health and life of citizens from obvious and serious threats;

- that the most effective way to protect children's rights is the recognition, expanding and legal protection of their parents' rights;

- that the main demographic problem of our peoples and peoples of the world today is not the mythical "overpopulation" but birthrate decline, and, therefore, it is necessary for more rather than fewer children to be born into a family, for a big family once again to become a respectable social norm;

- that human life is sacred and any human life has to be legally protected from the moment of conception to the natural death, while abortion and euthanasia contradict this;

- that such kinds of reproductive technology as the so-called "surrogate motherhood" contradict human rights and genuine human dignity, including dignity of the "surrogate mother" and the child, and, therefore, shouldn't be allowed;

- that legislative, administrative, political and economic decisions taken by the governments shall not be destructive for the natural family or diminish the rights of family and parents;

- that the main aim of family policy at any level must be the preservation and consolidation of a complete extended Natural Family, family lifestyle, fatherhood, motherhood, respect to parents and solidarity between generations, traditional family values and culture of family life.

We proclaim that the marriage between a man and a woman, Natural Family, right to life from the moment of conception to the natural death, rights of parents, freedom of religion and worship, necessity to protect public morals, originate from the nature of human being and family, and constitute an indispensable foundation of any society.

All the good governments and healthy social forces must protect these values. Propaganda in favour of their derogation or destruction is similar to the propaganda of war or racial hatred and must not be tolerated. The governments that reject these values and persecute people defending them cannot be considered democratic and must be declared illegitimate, as they act against genuine interest of both their nations and humanity as a whole.

All the international human rights treaties and other international instruments must be interpreted in favor of these values and the aforesaid principles. Any norms and interpretations contradicting them must be rejected and declared void, as they are inhuman.

We declare that the attempts of some governments and NGOs, accompanied by severe pressure, to impose upon other countries and international community approaches, norms and solutions that contradict the aforesaid values and principles, as well as the traditional family and cultural values of our nations, constitute a form of cultural imperialism, and we regard such attempts as aggressive intervention in the affairs of sovereign nations.

We declare, in particular, that universally recognized norms of international law have to protect people against truly unfair discrimination on the basis of inherited qualities like ethnic background, or their devotion to great values, e.g. religious beliefs, and not to lead to unreasonable expansion of the privileges for some groups of people. As the so-called “sexual orientation” or “gender identity” are not innate qualities, neither are they related to any sublime value, there is no reason to list these characteristics among the prohibited grounds for discrimination. Instead of protecting anyone against unfair discrimination, such inclusion results in the unfair discrimination of Christians and other supporters of traditional family and moral values, rejecting the behavior that is morally unacceptable for them. Such artificial expansion of the notion of discrimination is inadmissible and destructive.

Our countries, with their centuries-old traditions and cultures, including family values and culture of family life and child rearing, are worthy heirs of the high moral principles and standards of our glorious ancestors. Nobody has a right to force us to reject our traditions and moral values or modify them in accordance with false standards that someone has invented. The legal and diplomatic framework of the global community, including that of the modern Europe, shall take into consideration the rights of our nations and provide secure protection for our cultural and moral legacy and our families.

We own genuine family values based on Christian traditions and are convinced that the global community, including the European community, needs the cultural and moral legacy that we keep and pass on. Therefore, if any intergovernmental structure, even the one that believes itself entitled to speak on behalf of the international structures, for instance, on behalf of the whole Europe, rejects our family, moral and cultural values, imposing instead sinister things that are against nature, we will reject such structure. We do not need structures that bring destruction instead of creation.

We also recognize that our countries are connected with strong historical and cultural links, and our people share common destiny. We will not allow anyone to disseminate alienation, hostility and misunderstanding between us, to separate us and bring us far apart.

We unite our efforts to protect our common values, first of all, family and morality, and demand that our governments do the same.

Based on the above, we:

- declare our intention to develop international cooperation and people's diplomacy in the interests of Natural Family and parents with children, for protection of traditional family and moral values;

- express our support to the social forces of France and other countries aimed at the protection of the Natural Family, marriage between a man and a woman, rights of parents, traditional family and moral values;

- support the activity of those healthy international forces that consistently defend the Natural Family, rights of parents, traditional family and moral values, in particular, the efforts of the World Congress of Families;

- condemn those governments that act tyrannically in imposing upon their nations the laws that recognize the so-called "same-sex families" or "same-sex marriages", and especially those that allow such couples to adopt children;

- consider infamous and incompatible with the principles of democracy the actions of the government of France that persecutes those protesting against such decisions or protecting traditional family and moral values, and restricts their liberty of speech;

- consider as unacceptable, contradicting the principles of democracy and infringing human rights, legal or de facto prohibition of choosing home education (family education) by the parents for their children, which is effective in Germany, Sweden and some other countries;

- express our support for the legislative decisions aimed at the protection of family and moral values, in particular, for laws and bills prohibiting the propaganda of homosexuality among children in Russia, Ukraine and other countries;

- call upon and demand to reject any regulations or legislative initiatives that imply including such characteristics as "sexual orientation" or "gender identity" into the lists of the prohibited grounds for discrimination;

- urge the governments of our countries and other countries of the world to provide active support at the international level for the Natural Family, right to life, traditional family and moral values, and to use international and national instruments as countermeasures to the imposition of immoral approaches and norms, destructive for family both in our countries and elsewhere;

- urge the governments of our countries to use international mechanisms at different levels for stopping the illegal persecution of the supporters of the Natural Family and traditional family and moral values in France and other countries;

- urge the governments of our countries to use international mechanisms at different levels for stopping the persecution of parents choosing home education (family education) for their children in Germany, Sweden and other countries;

- urge the governments of our countries to reject the so-called "juvenile technologies" ("child protection technologies"), implying extensive intervention of the representatives of the state or non-governmental structures into the family affairs and into the relations between children and their parents under the pretext of protecting children's rights, and to base the legislation on the presumption that the parents are acting in the interests of their children in good faith and on good grounds;

- urge the governments of our countries to consistently build the national legislation and state politics at all levels on the aforesaid principles, and to reject those national and international legal regulations and approaches that contradict these principles;

- urge the governments of our countries to develop friendship and comprehensive cooperation in all the spheres, first of all, in the sphere of protection of family and moral values;

- urge the governments and civil society of our countries to protect national sovereignty and to take decisions corresponding to the will of our peoples and their genuine interests, resisting sinister influence or pressure from elsewhere;

- urge all the civil society forces of our countries and other countries of the world to unite their efforts for protecting Natural Family, rights of parents, life and morals, contributing to the strengthening of the family, the growth of respect to fatherhood, motherhood, rights of parents, their unique role and authority in bringing up their children, as well as to consistently counteract anything that is detrimental for the family, rights of parents and public morals.

We appeal to other organizations from different countries, including those of the former USSR countries, as well as from other Slavic states, calling them to join the present *Memorandum* and invite them to promote cooperation and common efforts to protect family, fatherhood, motherhood and morals.

Presented and adopted in Yalta (Ukraine) at the International Parents Forum 12.06.2013.

List of the signatories – NGOs (in Russian alphabetical order) and their representatives[1]:

1. FamilyPolicy.ru Advocacy Group, P. Parfentiev (Russia)
2. Association for the protection of family, parents and children, M. Ozhegova (Russia)
3. Association of the Parents Community, Bila Tserkva city, K. Talanchuk (Ukraine)
4. Public Organization "City of Sevastopol", A. Sitnikov (Ukraine)
5. Movement for the Protection of Childhood (Nizhny Novgorod Oblast Council), S. Pchelintsev (Russia)
6. Nikolayev City Youth Information Consultative Centre for the Protection of Family and Person "Dialog", V. Rogatin (Ukraine)
7. Crimea Educational Center "Life", O. Ignatev (Ukraine)
8. Kharkiv Orthodox Parents Movement "For Childhood, Family and Morality", S. Prokopenko (Ukraine)
9. "For Family Rights" NGO, P. Parfentiev (Russia)
10. Leningrad Oblast Branch of "For Family Rights" NGO, O. Bogdanov (Russia)
11. Public Organization "Healthy Nation", Dnepropetrovsk city, D. Pavlov (Ukraine)
12. Public Organization "Kadetsky Soyuz", Odessa city, A. Gaydarova (Ukraine)
13. Kyiv Nobility Association, V. Matveev (Ukraine)
14. Nikolayev Oblast Branch of the All-Ukrainian Public Organization "Kozachestvo Zaporozhskoye", A. Inozemtsev (Ukraine)
15. Leningrad Oblast Branch of the All-Russian Public Organization "Interregional Parents' Meeting", O. Bogdanov (Russia)
16. Nikolayev City Youth Public Organization "Molodaya Gvardiya", V. Mishustin (Ukraine)
17. Nikolayev Oblast Public Organization "Morskoye Sobraniye", V. Cherniy (Ukraine)
18. Public Organization "Moscow City Parents Committee", R. Tkachenko (Russia)
19. "Otdelny Divizion" Project, R. Tkachenko (Russia)
20. RGPT "Pravoslavnaya Prosvita", Kirovograd city, S. Stchastshenko (Ukraine)
21. "Orthodox Brotherhoods of Crimea", E. Loginovsky (Ukraine)
22. "Orthodox Parents Committee", Volnogorsk city, Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, L. Garagula (Ukraine)
23. Public Organization "Orthodox Parents Committee", Dnepropetrovsk city, G. Lavrentev (Ukraine)
24. Public Organization "Orthodox Parents Committee", Zhitomir city, D. Bezrukov (Ukraine)
25. Public Organization "Orthodox Parents Committee", Kakhovka city, Kherson Oblast, S. Bzhezitskaya (Ukraine)
26. All-Russian Public Organization "Citizents of Russia Trade Union", A. Kurinov (Russia)
27. Regional Public Movement "Parents for the Protection of Family and Childhood", Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug – Ugra, M. Fedotova (Russia)
28. Public Organization "Parents of Odessa Region for Children", Odessa city, D. Baibakov (Ukraine)
29. Public Organization "Parents Committee", Borodyansk city, Kyiv Oblast, O. Yeremenko (Ukraine)

[1] As of 19 June 2013. The same representative can be listed several times, if the same person was authorized to represent several NGOs.

30. Public Organization “Parents Committee”, Dneprodzerzhink city, E. Prodan (Ukraine)
31. “Parents Committee”, Dobropolye city, Donetsk Oblast, G. Andrushkuv (Ukraine)
32. Public Organization “Parents Committee”, Zheltye Vody city, T. Galushka (Ukraine)
33. Public Organization “Parents Committee”, Kharkiv Oblast, A. Kanevskiy (Ukraine)
34. Public Organization “Parents Committee of Lugansk Oblast”, N. Zaika & E. Shulga (Ukraine)
35. Public Organization “Parents Committee of Lviv Oblast”, S. Vasiliv (Ukraine)
36. NGO “Parents Committee of Nikolayev Oblast”, A. Polovenko (Ukraine)
37. Public Organization “Parents Committee”, Ternopil city, O. Kozachenko (Ukraine)
38. All-Ukrainian Public Organization “Parents Committee of Ukraine”, Y. Vinichenko (Ukraine)
39. Public Organization “Parents Committee”, Chernihiv city, S. Emchenko (Ukraine)
40. “Russian Nobility Association of Crimea”, E. Loginovsky (Ukraine)
41. “Russian Community of the South of Crimea”, E. Loginovsky (Ukraine)
42. Nikolayev City Public Organization “Russian National Community “Rusich” – Nikolayev”, T. Belousova & Z. Shatalova (Ukraine)
43. “Russian Community”, Yalta city, I. Alekseyeva (Ukraine)
44. Public Organization “Russian Cultural Centre of Nikolayev Oblast”, A. Truhin (Ukraine)
45. Regional Public Organization “Sankt-Petersburg Parents Committee”, M. Bogdanov (Russia)
46. MBF “Family – Unity – Fatherhood”, Minsk city, A. Chernavskiy (Belarus)
47. Regional Public Organization “The Family and the World”, A. Kislichenko (Russia)
48. “Council of the Veteran City Builders”, Yalta city, E. Loginovsky (Ukraine)
49. Public Organization “Trezvaya Svyataya Rus’”, V. Kodachenko (Ukraine)
50. Chairman of the Kharkiv Oblast Public Organization “S. R. N.”, O. Zarubin (Ukraine)
51. Family and Demography Foundation, A. Komov – World Congress of Families Representative in Russia & CIS (Russia)
52. Public Organization “Khmelnitsk City Parents Council “Pokrov”, L. Shevchuk (Ukraine)
53. Nikolayev City Public Organization “Centre for the Russian Culture “Rus’”, E. Bondarenko (Ukraine)