



Fédération Mondiale des Anciens Combattants World Veterans Federation

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Our Ref : 82

Mrs. Adriana Krnáčová
Mayor of Prague
Mariánské náměstí 2/2
Prague 1
Czech Republic

Dear Mrs. Krnáčová,

The World Veterans Federation was founded over 65 years ago to defend, promote, influence and encourage International peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the International Bill of Human Rights and other international instruments. Co-operation and partnerships between national veteran organisations and the exchange of expertise and experience in all fields of common interest are a vital pillar of our Constitution. The federation currently consists of over 172 veterans' organizations from 121 countries, representing some 45 million veterans worldwide.

The Executive Board of the World Veterans Federation respects and acknowledges the rights of every country and city to dispose of its historical monuments. However, the WVF notes with displeasure the recent decision concerning the monument of Ivan Stepanovich Konev, Marshal of the Soviet Union, in Náměstí Interbrigady, and its future explanatory plates on his alleged role during the tragic Hungarian events of 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968. This monument should remain a symbol of the liberation of Prague and the struggle against Nazism.

In this matter, the World Veterans Federation would like to underline the 19th Resolution adopted by the 28th General Assembly: "For international protection of World Cultural and natural heritage against new dangers of destruction" as follows:

- 1. Recalling** the principles of the Convention for the protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the 17th meeting of the General Conference of the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO), in Paris from 17 October to 21 November 1972;
- 2. Noting** that world cultural and natural heritage is becoming more and more threatened by destruction not only by natural causes of degradation, but also by the evolution of social and economic life and by even more formidable acts of deterioration or destruction;

3. **Deeply worried** by shameful acts of pillaging and voluntary destruction of historic monuments and the smuggling of museum artefacts of great value, during times of armed conflict, most often perpetrated in the logic of revenge or psychological war;

4. **Given** the inestimable value of these historic monuments and places of memory as national and universal cultural and natural heritage sites protected by international laws and conventions;

5. **Considering** that the protection of this heritage on the national level, notably in developing countries, is still insufficient because of limited means put in place and the lack of economic, scientific, and technical resources of these countries;

6. **Invites** the governments of member countries to pursue and combine their efforts and actions regarding the protection of their cultural and natural historic heritage sites; in accordance with the recommendations and stipulations of the universal Convention of UNESCO for the protection of their historic heritage sites, especially in order to:

- Ensure the identification, protection, conservation, development and transmission of cultural and national heritage to future generations;
- Adopt a general policy aiming to assign a function to natural and cultural heritage in collective life, and to integrate the protection of this heritage into programs of general planning;
- Launch a national and international awareness campaign to make the public understand the gravity of the destruction of cultural and natural heritage, of pillaging and the illicit trading of cultural goods illegally acquired during wars or armed conflicts;
- Reinforce sanctions against the perpetrators of destruction, theft and smuggling of cultural goods, by assimilating their acts with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

I remain at your disposal should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan-Viggo Bergtun', written in a cursive style.

Dan-Viggo Bergtun
Président