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PRESS RELEASE

THE EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE
awarded to the
INTERNATIONAL HELSINKI FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
by
THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

10th of May 1989 Today the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) will receive the 1989 European Human Rights Prize of the Council of Europe. The Prize is also given to Lech Walesa.

In announcing the Prize the Committee of the Council of Europe stated that "... THE INTERNATIONAL HELSINKI FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (IHF), VIENNA, HAS MADE AN EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, POLITICAL LIBERTY AND THE RULE OF LAW, WHICH ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF ANY TRULY DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY AND REFLECTED NOTABLY IN THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS".

We are proud and honored to be the recipients of such a distinguished Prize. We and our 15 national committees are receiving the Prize because of our monitoring of human rights violations in all 35 CSCE signatory states and pointing them out whenever they occur. Most recently we protested violations of the Helsinki Accords in:

CSSR: police brutality; the sentencing of Vaclav Havel and others; the humiliating treatment of Jiri Hajek while taken off the train on his way to an IHF meeting in Warsaw and the refusal to let him and many others to travel abroad.

ROMANIA: the destruction of villages; persecution of minorities; as well as the arrests on January 21 of staff members of the Romanian publishing house Scintea, for allegedly producing leaflets criticizing the political regime.

TURKEY: prison conditions and the great number of political prisoners; persecution of the Kurdish minority; the sentence meted out against Fatma Yazici, editor of a Turkish journal, for having summarized a report on Turkey published by the U.S. Helsinki Watch.

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