

'Visegrad Four' Slam Tymoshenko's Arrest

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Former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko attending a court hearing in a district court in Kiev on Wednesday. **Alexander Prokopenko**

Four countries that were once part of the Communist bloc have condemned the imprisonment of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko during her trial for abuse of office.

The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia — known as the Visegrad Four — said in a joint statement Tuesday that Tymoshenko's arrest was "inadequate to the charges of violating court rules," and "fair, transparent and independent judicial procedure should be granted to all Ukrainians."

Tymoshenko was arrested on a judge's orders Friday during a hearing. She has criticized the trial as an attempt by the current government to bar her from elections.

The countries say Ukraine will have to adhere to the rule of law and fair judicial procedures if it is to join the European Union.

The U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, John Tefft, has requested a meeting with Tymoshenko in detention, Itar-Tass [reported](#) Wednesday. It remained unclear whether he would be allowed one.

Heavyweight boxing champion Vitaly Klitchko, who is a member of Kiev's city legislature, said Wednesday that he was ready to act as a guarantor for Tymoshenko's bail, Interfax reported. Her supporters collected about 10,000 signatures for a petition for her release, and about 100 of them continued to camp in downtown Kiev to protest her arrest, news reports said.

Tymoshenko, who appeared in court for her ongoing trial Wednesday, has voiced no complaints about her conditions in detention but asked supporters to provide her with a television set, a copy of Ukraine's Constitution and books by Anton Chekhov, Mario Vargas Llosa, Haruki Murakami and several Ukrainian writers, her husband [told](#) the newspaper Ukrainskaya Pravda.

(AP, MT)

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