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EU Lawmakers Walk Out During Matviyenko's Address in Geneva

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Czech lawmaker Markéta Pekarová Adamová walks out during a speech by Valentina Matviyenko.
marketaadamova / Instagram

A group of European lawmakers walked out in protest during a speech on Wednesday by Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko at the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva.

Matviyenko, who is under EU and Swiss sanctions, was speaking at the morning general debate at the UN office in Geneva when a group of EU lawmakers "demonstratively left the room."

"I walked out during the speech by Valentina Matviyenko ... because I refuse to be a prop for the lies on which the criminal Kremlin regime is built," Czech lawmaker Markéta Pekarová Adamová, who leads her country's lower house of parliament, wrote on Instagram.

German Bundestag President Julia Klöckner also joined the walkout. In a statement, she denounced "cynical attempts to distort history and reverse the roles of perpetrator and

victim," adding that Germany "continues to stand firmly on Ukraine's side."

The World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva runs from July 29 to 31.

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Russian state media reported that the Russian delegation to the event arrived on Sunday and included senior officials such as Deputy State Duma Chairman Pyotr Tolstoy and International Affairs Committee head Leonid Slutsky.

Swiss media earlier this month reported that Matviyenko and 12 other Russians had been invited to the Inter-Parliamentary Union events in Geneva despite sanctions. Authorities issued special permits to allow their entry.

Earlier this week, Matviyenko addressed participants at the conference with a speech outlining the Kremlin's official position on the war in Ukraine. She accused Kyiv of "shelling peaceful regions of the Donbas" and killing civilians, saying Russia was "forced to intervene to stop the bloodshed."

She also accused the West of waging "information warfare," called for the lifting of sanctions and invited foreign lawmakers to visit the Donbas and the so-called "Alley of Angels" memorial.

Ukrainian parliament Deputy Speaker Olena Kondratiuk, who is also attending the conference, described the inclusion of Russian officials as "appeasement of the aggressor" and "hypocrisy."

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry called the invitation for Matviyenko to attend "disgraceful."

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