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**To the Organizers of the ICC Mediation Competition,**

Dear colleagues,

The Kyiv School of Economics (“KSE”) is proud to be supporting a team to participate in this year’s competition in Paris. It has come to our attention, however, that this year’s competition will include a team from Russia’s St. Petersburg State University. The European Union—and France in particular—has demonstrated a strong commitment to sanctioning Russian institutions and individuals from these sorts of international events. We are thus deeply saddened that the ICC’s decision does not reflect the spirit of these policies.

We take this matter very seriously. As you may or may not know, the rector of St. Petersburg State University has openly supported Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, while opposing students from the school have been expelled for participating in protests against the war<sup>1</sup>. Welcoming representatives from such an institution to an international mediation competition thus raises a number of ethical concerns.

*First*, this decision sends the wrong message to students, and to the world. Instead of supporting oppressed Russian intellectuals and students, this decision perpetuates and rewards a University and academic leaders who support a regime that is responsible for significant global injustice. Rather than setting an example for the core values of academic leadership, this action risks whitewashing narratives that justify aggression.

*Second*, this decision impugns the integrity of the competition, and even the ICC, which was created more than a century ago with the belief that “strong and mutually beneficial ties among nations through trade, industry and commerce would not only make nations prosperous but also make them less likely to go to war.”<sup>2</sup> By offering a platform to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/03/09/russias-oldest-university-to-expel-students-detained-at-anti-war-protests-kommersant-a76838>

<sup>2</sup> <https://iccwbo.org/dispute-resolution/dispute-resolution-services/icc-international-court-of-arbitration/centenary-of-the-icc-court/#anchor-origins-and-history>

participants associated with an institution that has endorsed war and crimes of aggression, the event undermines the ICC's own commitment to peace and prosperity among nations.

*Finally*, on a personal level, KSE's all-Ukrainian team have each been personally touched by Russia's illegal war. They each have relatives and loved ones who have suffered due to the war; now, they will be asked to compete, and indeed "mediate," against a state university that aligns with the very policies of aggression that have caused them so much personal anguish.

Our broader KSE community is literally on the front lines. **Oleksandr Polivodskiy**, an esteemed lawyer and lecturer at NaUKMA, tragically lost his life defending his country. **Leonid Loboiko**, a judge of the Ukrainian Supreme Court, tragically lost his life during an artillery attack in Kharkiv. **Nasi Nayem**, a lawyer and prominent civil activist, also served in the war and was wounded in action. **Vitalii Tytych**, a lawyer who fights in the Armed Forces of Ukraine while leading the Raphael Lemkin Society. **Yuliia Matveeva**, a judge from Mariupol, endured seven months in Russian captivity. Their sacrifices remind us why it is imperative to stand up for what is right and ensure that academic platforms do not become complicit in endorsing or whitewashing aggression.

In 2022, the Kyiv School of Economics launched several initiatives, including "#No Ukrainian Panels Without Ukrainian Voices", "Global Minds for Ukraine", and "Ukrainian Global University", to ensure that global academic discourse remains aligned with the values of integrity and support for those affected by the war. We are proud to report that leading academic institutions in France—such as Paris 1, the Paris School of Economics, Sciences Po, and the Toulouse School of Economics—have actively supported Ukraine, Ukrainian academia, and the Kyiv School of Economics. They have provided shelter to Ukrainian students and academics. It is therefore disheartening to see that in France, a country that leads the EU in upholding justice, a team from St. Petersburg State University is permitted to participate in a high-level event.

In light of these concerns, we urge you to reconsider the inclusion of teams from institutions that have clearly taken a stance in support of aggression, and respectfully request that St. Petersburg State University be banned from participating in the competition.

We trust that you will act swiftly to uphold the values of global peace, academic integrity and justice.

Sincerely,

Tymofii Brik, Rector  
Kyiv School of Economics