

Ukraine Attacks Soccer Boycott

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KIEV — Ukraine's Foreign Ministry described threats by European powers to boycott the Euro football championship it will host in June as a return to Cold War tactics.

"I would not like to think that German state leaders can reanimate methods of the Cold War period and make sports a hostage of politics," Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesman Oleh Voloshin told Interfax on Monday.

He was responding to a German government spokesman, who said any visit by Chancellor Angela Merkel to Ukraine during the tournament was linked to the fate of Yulia Tymoshenko, convicted last October in a case her supporters say was politically driven.

Earlier, Czech President Vaclav Klaus joined German President Joachim Gauck in canceling participation at a summit of Central European presidents in the Ukrainian Black Sea resort of Yalta on May 11 and 12 over Tymoshenko's case.

Ukraine now faces more potential boycotts by European politicians during the tournament, which it will co-host with Poland.

Viviane Reding, EU commissioner for justice, fundamental rights and citizenship, has also urged Michel Platini, president of European football's governing body UEFA, to raise the issue of Tymoshenko with Ukraine.

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