

EaP CSF Steering Committee Statement on the invasion of Ukraine by Russian military forces

Brussels, 24th February 2022

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum strongly condemns the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine and its people. This unprovoked multilevel attack aims to destroy a country that has worked tirelessly towards achieving a democratic future. Blame for the destruction and human suffering brought about by this aggression lies with only one country and its president. We call on the Russian Federation to cease military action and withdraw its troops from Ukraine immediately.

Eight years ago, Russia created an ongoing conflict by occupying the Crimean Peninsula and parts of Eastern Ukraine - and on 22 February 2022, brazenly recognised the so-called "independence" of the two separatist regions of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic in the eastern regions of Ukraine. With this, the Russian Federation gave a clear sign that it did not intend to respect the rules and principles of international law. The President of Russia openly denies the existence of the Ukrainian nation and declares his further intention to dismantle the Ukrainian state. The invasion of Ukraine by Russian military forces is yet another violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and thus the Minsk Agreement, to which Russia is a signatory. Only the joint resistance of all civilised countries can stop the metastases of this defiant act of undisguised aggression from spreading within Ukraine and to other countries of the Eastern Partnership.

We call on the European Union and its member states to support Ukraine in this conflict to the maximum extent possible. If the European Union and its policy towards the countries of the Eastern Partnership is to remain relevant, its support for the defence of Ukraine must be significantly increased.

The Russian Federation must be held accountable for its actions, thus we call on the European Union and its member states to **immediately**:

- **Support Ukraine in its defence operations with military aid** - including arms, ammunition, equipment, intelligence and cyber security support - humanitarian aid and financial aid.
- **Exclude Russia from the SWIFT payment system**, barring Russian companies from the international financial market and prohibiting the purchase of Russian sovereign debt on the primary and secondary markets.
- **Strengthen support, financial and otherwise, for independent media and civil society** in Ukraine. Make their voices heard across the EU and at the highest levels of debate. Implement substantive measures that ensure the safety of leaders and activists of civil society organisations in Ukraine who are courageously tending to the needs of affected civilians.
- **Expand personal sanctions on Duma members and Russian oligarchs**, including their families and consider the confiscation of property belonging to these individuals. Continue to ensure the freezing of their financial and physical assets in

Europe, precluding them from travelling, buying property or sending their children to schools anywhere in the EU in the near future, in full coordination with the US, the UK and other allies and international partners in a united front.

- **Expand restrictive measures such as import and export bans in strategic sectors** which are key to Russia and the Russian economy, such as technology and the digital market, but also in economic areas with close financial ties to intelligence services and the military. To monitor and make sure these sanctions are respected by European businesses.

Looking ahead, we call on the European Union and its member states to:

- **Agree on a conditional list of sanctions that can be triggered immediately** in response to further escalation of the conflict. Such sanctions should be triggered immediately if other red lines are crossed, to ensure that sanctions can yield their full potential to signal and coerce.
- **Coordinate with partners and allies to adopt measures aimed at eliminating dependency on Russian gas**, accelerating diversification, increasing minimum gas storage requirements, and enhancing energy efficiency.
- **Complete the termination of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.**
- **Support the diversification of critical supplies for industries where Russia has a monopoly** on such supplies.

Furthermore, we urge the European Union to provide Ukraine with a clear European perspective and to formulate and publish a comprehensive roadmap for Ukraine's membership of the European Union. Clearly defined European integration is necessary for Ukraine to fight the aggressor.

We call on the Eastern Partnership countries, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova, to condemn this Russian aggression. We call on them not to recognise the so-called independence of the Russian-occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk.

We deplore the use of the Republic of Belarus as a staging ground for the invasion of Ukraine and condemn the regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka, which is complicit with the decision of the Russian President.

Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders must be preserved. **We continue to stand united in full solidarity with Ukraine and its people.**

Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum