

Leaders' Statement on Ukraine

16 February 2022

Ukraine faces the threat of an unprecedented military aggression by the Russian Federation. This is not only a threat to the security of Ukraine and the safety of its people. This is a threat to Ukraine's prosperous democratic and economic development, the rules-based international order, and to the security of Europe as a whole.

We, leaders of the political groups in the European Parliament, condemn the Russian military build-up in and around Ukraine and its threat of a military aggression against it. This military build-up, at the border with Ukraine, in Belarus, in illegally annexed Crimea, in the Black Sea as well as in the unrecognized separatist entities of Donetsk and Luhansk is a direct threat to Ukraine's security. The threat of the use of force goes against the UN Charter and the fundamental principles of international law. We are united in our demand that the Russian Federation cease its military threat and its attempts at destabilisation and immediately and fully withdraw its forces and military equipment from the borders of Ukraine to the places of the original dislocation.

We unwaveringly support the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We strongly believe that any country's choice of alliances must not be subject to a third country's approval. We stand behind diplomatic efforts by European leaders to defuse tensions and we urge Russia to contribute to immediate de-escalation. We are equally determined in our support for a robust response should Russia continue not to abide by its international commitments and obligations and launch an attack against Ukraine. We reiterate our call on the Council of the European Union to remain prepared to swiftly adopt severe economic and financial sanctions against the Russian Federation in close coordination with transatlantic and other like-minded partners. Those should include the exclusion of Russia from the SWIFT system, individual sanctions against individuals close to the Russian President and their families, entailing the freezing of financial and physical assets in the EU and travel bans. We reiterate our call for immediately halting the Nordstream 2 project should Russia launch an attack against Ukraine.

We resolutely reject any attempts at weakening or undermining the principles and mechanisms for security and cooperation in Europe and welcome the unity of European and transatlantic parties in this respect. These mechanisms and principles have been jointly agreed in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, reconfirmed in the Paris Charter for a New Europe in 1990 and are embodied today by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We therefore unreservedly welcome and support the efforts of the OSCE Chairmanship in Office to initiate a substantial and sincere dialogue on European security with the aim of recommitting to the principles, strengthening the institutions and reinvigorating the mechanisms for security in Europe in accordance with the letter and the spirit of Helsinki.

We express our undivided solidarity with the people of Ukraine. More than 14.000 people have already lost their lives in a tragic conflict in eastern Ukraine that was ignited by Russia

and is being kept alive by Russian-backed so-called separatists. We resolutely reject the continuous Russian attempts at destabilizing Ukraine, including the possible recognition of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk entities, and preventing the country to move forward on its path towards democracy and prosperity.

We stand united behind Ukraine's efforts towards democratic reform, economic prosperity and social progress. We believe that these efforts deserve the strongest possible support. We therefore call on the EU and its Member States to continue providing political support, economic help, macro-financial and technical assistance wherever needed, including in defence and security-related areas, and to develop a long-term strategy to support Ukraine's efforts in strengthening the resilience of its democratic institutions and economy. We welcome that some countries have stepped up their military support to Ukraine and their provision of defensive weapons, in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter that allows individual and collective self-defence. We also call on Ukraine to remain united and steadfast in its comprehensive reforms in line with commitments taken as part of the EU Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. These reforms will underpin Ukraine's ambitions for closer political and economic association with the EU. We call for the EU institutions to maintain a credible long-term perspective for Ukraine's EU accession in line with Article 49 TEU, as for any European state, and to work towards a merit-based acceleration of gradual integration into the EU Single Market as foreseen in the Association Agreement.

Only Ukrainians can decide about the path their country should take to the future. We will support their democratic rights, fundamental freedoms and human rights as well as the country's choice for a European future in freedom, democracy, peace and security.