



Dear Members

Dear friends

A war between two sovereign states begins on the European continent with its procession of dramatic consequences.

Our movement was founded in 1919 after the First World War in a spirit of peace and friendship between peoples. This is our first reason for existing within the framework of civil society, local, national, European and international.

On your behalf, the board and I send our fullest support to our Ukrainian friends, women and men, attacked in a way we thought was outdated, violating all international rules such as the United Nations Charter of 1945, the European Convention on Human Rights of the Council of Europe whose two protagonists were member states until February 24, 2022.

An extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Ministers on 24 February :

- “Condemns in the strongest terms the armed aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation in violation of international law;
- decides to examine without delay, and in close co-ordination with the Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary General, the measures to be taken in response to the serious violation by the Russian Federation of its statutory obligations as a member state of the Council from Europe ;
- urges the Russian Federation to immediately and unconditionally cease its military operations in Ukraine;
- condemns the recognition by the Russian Federation of the Ukrainian oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent entities;
- reiterates its unwavering commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders;
- expresses its support for Ukraine and its solidarity with its population”.

On 25 February 2022, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in extraordinary session took the decision to suspend the rights of representation of the Russian Federation in application of Article 8 of the Statute of the Council of Europe "Any member member of the Council of Europe which seriously infringes the provisions of Article 3 may be suspended from its right of representation and asked by the Committee of Ministers to withdraw under the conditions laid down in Article 7. If it is not disregarding this invitation, the Committee may decide that the member in question has ceased to belong to the Board as of a date that the Committee sets itself.

Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe made the following statement regarding the military offensive launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine:

“I strongly condemn the military offensive launched by Russia against Ukraine in flagrant violation of the Statute of the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights. The hour is dark for Europe and all that it represents.

I call on the Russian authorities to immediately and unconditionally cease hostilities and return to diplomacy to restore peace and avoid further devastating consequences for the entire continent. The protection of human lives must remain the priority. All my thoughts go out to Ukraine, its people and its authorities.

Together with the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, we will quickly take the necessary measures to respond to the current situation.”

We can support strongly these positions of the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in all respects and join them.

But the war ends one day, and we call on the parties to do everything possible to do this, to stop this endless cycle which will only cause countless victims on both sides, will deprive children of families. We must act, insist that effective negotiating teams are ready to negotiate, including women, this is essential for a lasting and balanced peace as provided for in United Nations Resolution 1325 (2000). Women have specific rights in armed conflict, and regardless of their age, they must be protected from gender-based violence. We must help Ukrainian women's associations in this direction.

This resolution but also the Geneva Convention and the Istanbul Convention give rights to Ukrainians in terms of medical and humanitarian assistance and we must use our influence to allow it.

The numerous infringements of the Russian Federation constitute crimes but also the States which are its allies, they will have to be prosecuted before the International Criminal Court and sanctioned.

We are sure that in your national associations you participate in networks of solidarity and actions in favor of the thousands of refugees who are arriving.

If you have any ideas about actions we could take at European level, please send them to us.

How not to think of our friends from the Russian Association? How are they informed? The links must not be broken, the experience of our movement shows that they are the leaven. future peace.

In the next few weeks we will offer you a webinar.

More than ever, let us be united in friendship and solidarity, for peace, democracy and support the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and its Secretary General.

For the Board,
Dr. Anne Bergheim-Nègre
President UWE