

Paris, 2nd March 2022

Press release

Europe unites in support of Ukraine under attack

On the 24th of February 2022, the Russian army invaded Ukraine.

This war is for real, with its fighting, its casualties and wounded, with its fleeing populations.

This war is European. It is being fought at the geographical centre of our continent, at the gates of the European Union.

This war is the folly of a man determined to rewrite history.

This war is illegal, conducted in violation of all the rules of international law and after the rejection of peace initiatives.

This war is imperial, aimed at the disappearance of a State and the subjugation of its territory.

This war is declared against the expansion of liberal democracy, to prevent Ukraine from going in that direction.

This war is a new international division, between States that condemn it and those that do not.

The European Union condemns it totally and is fighting it. Since the first hour of the offensive, the EU-27 have shown Vladimir Putin that he cannot divide them. On the contrary. The sanctions against Russian personalities and entities have been extended and strengthened. The G7 countries and the EU have decided to block the operations of the Russian central bank on their soil, severely restricting its ability to convert its foreign exchange reserves. European airspace is closed to Russian aircraft. Two propaganda channels are banned from broadcasting to stop disinformation.

But the European response goes beyond the policy of sanctions. In this conflict, the Union is making progress on the road to affirm itself as a power. For the first time in its history, it has decided to send war material to a third country. Ammunition, weapons and other types of reinforcements will be supplied to the Ukrainian army. All member states are participating in this unprecedented effort, which is being coordinated by the EU and mobilised through a European fund. Many States are providing additional support, including Germany, which is thus turning a corner in its approach to conflicts and Europe along with it.

The EU is also preparing itself to welcome Ukrainians. The EU-27 are about to grant immediate temporary protection to millions of Ukrainians fleeing the war. The use of this exceptional protection regime would also be unprecedented. It will be worth considering for other conflicts.

This war requires our unity, our responsiveness and our creativity. It will have an economic and social cost. A European plan must share and spread the effort.

And prepare for the future. This war requires us to start thinking now about the post-war period.

The first challenge is energy. We have a whole range of means at our disposal to stop depending on fossil fuels, which provide the current Russian regime with a rent. The decarbonisation of our economies to be accelerated is a climatic imperative but also a geopolitical one.

The challenge is security. Thanks to the renewed unity of NATO in this war, it is the European security architecture that we must rethink, as President Macron is calling for.

The challenge is European. It invites us to respond to the European aspirations expressed by Ukraine. We will need to foster a new relationship with Russia, which directly addresses and benefits its people. A new area of cooperation is still to be designed with this vast part of our continent. In order to build, as Jacques Delors called it, the “greater Europe”.

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