

Condemnation of Russian military aggression against Ukraine and the probable war on Eastern Europe

Adopted at the YEPP Council of Presidents in Rome, 19.02.2022

Recognizing that:

1. Aggressive actions taken by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries in the past should be strongly condemned.
2. Peace, security and stability in Europe are paramount for the European Union.
3. Over the past decade, the Kremlin has used military aggression to undercut the sovereignty of the Ukrainian people and slow the country's integration into the European Union and NATO.
4. Russia is undermining independence and interfering in the internal affairs of the whole Euro-Atlantic area through a series of hybrid attacks on social media over the past decade¹.
5. The international community must stay united against the Russian aggressive actions towards Ukraine and other European countries.
6. Russia alone is responsible for the current standoff between Russia and EU/NATO.

Considering that:

1. After Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, more than 14 000 Ukrainians have been killed and 1,5 million have been internally displaced due to the war and land annexation².
2. Today, an estimated 100 000 Russian troops have been deployed near Ukraine. Russia has also begun moving military troops and surface-to-air missiles into Belarus for joint "military exercises"³.
3. Since January 12, Ukraine has experienced a wave of false reports alleging that explosives or "mines" had been planted in schools, malls, and airports (more than 600 places around the country)⁴.
4. More than 70 Ukrainian government websites were taken down for at least a day by Russian cyberattacks causing disruptions to the operation of the country⁵.
5. Possible military action will lead to an economic crisis and destabilization of the whole of Europe, which will further affect the well-being of European citizens.

¹ <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/nato-to-focus-on-hybrid-warfare-how-to-deter-russia/>

² <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/20/russia-ukraine-military-satellite/>

⁴ <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/russian-hybrid-threats-report-troops-arrive-in-belarus-as-propaganda-narratives-heat-up/>

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/14/world/europe/hackers-ukraine-government-sites.html>



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6. Many of the former Eastern bloc countries are still dependent on the Russian state when it comes to the supply of gas, weapons and ammunition and the maintenance of military equipment.
7. Energy dependent countries are slower and less direct in their answer to Russian wrongdoing.

The YEPP Council:

1. Calls for immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian borders and territories illegally occupied since 2014;
2. Supports the creation and implementation of EU's common comprehensive package of sanctions to respond to Kremlin's escalation against Ukraine and Black sea area;
3. Calls on EU Member States to coordinate with NATO how to assist Ukraine with providing necessary aid for its self-defense;
4. Stands for further promotion of Ukrainian democratic institutions and the rule of law.
5. Calls on the EU Member States to set up a working group at EU and NATO level to draw up a plan to diversify the military equipment and combat capability of European armies, which are still largely dependent on the Russian Federation when it comes to acquisition, modernization and maintenance of weapons and military equipment.
6. YEPP calls on the European Council to allow more local cooperation on defense as to allow a limited group of member states to use their capabilities when they want to. A less strict and rigid arrangement of Enhanced cooperation (Article 20 of the Treaty on European Union and Title III of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) is necessary. Other member states should not restrict a coalition of the willing to exist.
7. YEPP calls upon the member states of the two treaties (NATO and EU) to respect Ukrainian sovereignty and allow them to self determine on the application considering NATO and EU membership.
8. Calls on all able nations to provide Ukraine with defence material.