

Statement on Ukraine crisis

Reflecting the ETUC statement of 16-17 March 2022, UNI Europa reiterates its condemnation of the invasion of a sovereign nation, in breach of international law and calls on Russia to respect Ukrainian territorial integrity, demands the immediate cessation of military operations, insists that Russian troops leave the country, and calls for dialogue and talks for peace be started.

UNI Europa expresses its solidarity with all people, workers, and trade unions of Ukraine.

The pursuit of peace and democracy is a fundamental value of the trade union movement and an essential condition to secure safety, social justice and worker's and human rights.

UNI Europa supports all political and diplomatic initiatives and sanctions to secure peace and calls for humanitarian aid for the Ukrainian population in Ukraine and to welcome and support refugees in Europe.

UNI Europa denounces and condemns the repression in Russia against those who oppose the war in Ukraine and pledges to support Russian trade unions, workers, activists and pacifists who non-violently oppose the war, and expresses solidarity with the Russian and Belarussian people hit by the repercussions of the sanctions or by forms of discrimination for a war they are not responsible for.

UNI Europa demands international institutions, and particularly the European Union and Member States to:

- Immediately act through all possible means to achieve the cease-fire and to facilitate negotiations to initiate a peace process, with respect for democracy, human rights, and international conventions. The European Union must step up as an institution, and not leave diplomatic efforts and actions for peace just to individual governments and leaders.
- In the meantime, push Putin and his government to stop the aggression and invasion and start a real negotiation, to increase the pressure through all necessary forms of sanctions, which specifically target the interests and assets of the Russian leadership and elites, and to extend this to Belarus for its part in the military aggression on Ukraine.
- Investigate crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine during the invasion and bring those responsible to justice.
- Ensure security and protection on the borders and for the populations of those EU Member States and neighbouring countries which are the most exposed to current and potential Russian military operations.
- Open a concrete dialogue with Ukraine regarding the accession process of the country to the European Union. Even if such a process and compliance with the requirements will take time and will have to follow all the necessary steps according to EU rules, it would give a very powerful signal to Russia and the international community that

Ukraine is willing and welcome to participate in the European integration project in a spirit of peace and solidarity. The same dialogue should be opened with the other countries that have associated themselves with the EU like Georgia and Moldova, in order to guarantee stability and equal treatment to these countries. This should happen without detriment to the ongoing accession process of the Western Balkans.

- Establish fully protected humanitarian corridors to allow displaced people to move to safer parts of Ukraine and those in need of protection to leave the country safely and to set up reception and relocation plans within the EU.
- Provide immediate financial aid to secure humanitarian support to Ukraine and its population, as well as all necessary measures to assist those who have fled the country and reached the neighbouring EU Member States and the other countries of the region.
- Welcome all refugees and people fleeing from Ukraine and other countries, including Russia and Belarus, regardless of their nationality and migration status, and allow them the rights of mobility within the EU territory, without requiring biometric passports, and put in place adequate measures for relocation, reception and integration in EU countries.
- For these purposes, fully implement the Temporary Protection Directive (which was activated for the first time ever by the European Council on 4 March 2022 upon the European Commission's proposal) through solidarity and shared responsibility between EU Member States, by guaranteeing the full range of rights provided by the Directive, which include access to the labour market, housing, health care, education and welfare support, for all those who are entitled to this protection: Ukrainian nationals, and their family members; stateless persons and third-country nationals who benefited from international protection or equivalent protection in Ukraine, as well as their family members. Member States should extend the temporary protection to those third-country nationals legally residing in Ukraine who are unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country or region of origin.
- Recognise the specific situation of women and children in conflict zones and on arrival, including the risks of exploitation and gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence and trafficking.
- Recognise the particular situation facing elderly and vulnerable people and ensure that adequate protection is provided to meet their particular needs.
- Recognise the specific situation of black and ethnic minority people and take steps to prevent the discrimination and racism they face at the Ukrainian border and to prevent further discrimination as they travel through Europe.
- Pave paths for integration in the labour market for refugees and people who have left their countries because of war, guarantee them full equal treatment in the workplace and in society, and prevent and fight against any form of exploitation and discrimination.
- Introduce measures of compensation and alternative supply of goods and energy sources, to fight against speculation and to reduce the negative impacts of the war and the related sanctions on the populations of the EU Member States and neighbouring countries. Such measures should include the establishment of EU funding to minimise the increase of prices and tariffs, and the continuation of emergency measures successfully used by the EU to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak (such as SURE), by refinancing and refocusing them to address the consequences of the war on the economy and employment.
- UNI Europa warns against attempts to use the war to justify a deregulation agenda on workers' rights and social protection, or to go back to austerity and restrictive fiscal rules, which would exacerbate even further the negative economic and social consequences of the conflict and the related sanctions.

UNI Europa fully supports the efforts of our organizing centre COZZ and our affiliates in Poland and Romania to provide support to Ukrainian refugees and in particular the project in Poland, 'Unions Helping Refugees UHR'. UNI Europa encourages all affiliates to contribute to these examples of practical trade union solidarity.

UNI Europa fully supports the readiness of the ETUC, in coordination with ETUC affiliates, as well as with the ITUC and PERC, to:

- Lobby EU institutions and national governments, and international institutions including the Council of Europe, in support of the ETUC demands and to keep the pressure high.
- Support the peace process with respect for democracy, human rights, and international conventions.
- Reflect and analyse the historical roots of this conflict and the related geopolitical tensions, and develop a long-term strategy to build peace, democracy, sustainable growth and social justice in Europe.
- Support trade unions in their actions, including strikes, blockades and other forms of industrial action, to put pressure on those European companies that have chosen to remain in Russia or to continue having economic and trade activities with Russia.
- Provide financial aid to secure humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian population who have remained in the country through the Ukrainian trade unions.
- Provide financial and humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian refugees who have fled the country, through the trade unions of the EU Member States and the neighbouring region.
- Support ETUC affiliated trade unions in the countries of the region most exposed to the consequences of the Russian attacks as well as to support trade unions, civil society and individuals in Russia who openly stood up against the war.
- Strongly condemn the statements of FNPR in support of Putin's aggression against Ukraine, which go against our values and principles. Call on the FNPR to renounce their position and to clearly express themselves in favour of peace and democracy, as well as to show solidarity with Ukrainian people.
- Help establish humanitarian corridors in support of Ukrainian refugees; and help provide safe passage at EU borders for citizens of third countries residing in Ukraine who do not hold a Schengen visa.
- Activate mobilising actions for peace in Ukraine at EU and national level, to be coordinated at global level.