



Białystok Declaration: Cities and Regions in solidarity with Ukraine

6 May 2022

The European Alliance (EA) group in the European Committee of the Regions, at its extraordinary meeting in Białystok, Poland, held on 6 May 2022, confirmed its solidarity with Ukraine and agreed on the following declaration:

The EA Group:

1. strongly condemns the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression of Russia against free Ukraine as well as the involvement of Belarus which goes against all international agreements and norms and undermines the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and deplores the loss of life of many civilians through this attack and act of war; demands an immediate cessation of aggression, a ceasefire, and peace talks under international supervision.
2. reaffirms its full support for the people of Ukraine in defending their country, respect for international law, freedom and democratic values they share with the European Union;
3. calls all representatives of local and regional authorities to speak with one voice: deliberate attacks on civilians constitute war crimes; expresses its outrage and indignation over the reported atrocities on civilians and fully support the investigations launched on the war crimes and crimes against humanity;
4. calls for the unity of the EU institutions and Member States in response to this aggression and calls on the EU and its allies to take the strongest measures possible including all forms of trade without any delay against the Russian and Belarusian regimes;
5. calls on all regional and local governments across the EU to support the local and regional authorities (LRA) and Ukrainians citizens and the EU's LRA touched the most by unprecedented refugee crises, through whatever means they have at their disposal;

6. calls for the establishment of safe humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians from most dangerous places and provide them with medical assistance, including psychological assistance in the EU countries;
 7. calls for EU financial support to be delivered to the EU's east, bordering regions with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia in order to help the authorities to welcome and assist refugees coming from Ukraine, who should be granted refugee status under EU Asylum Law through accelerated emergency procedures;
 8. fully supports the European Committee of the Regions' Info Support Hub platform to link needs of Ukrainian and EU border regions with assistance from other EU regions. Stands ready to mobilise its cities and regions' capacities for humanitarian aid to be delivered to Ukraine at its mayors' requests;
 9. highlights the need to help European regional leaders and mayors who want to show solidarity by welcoming refugees, therefore sharing the burden with other regions and cities that are facing a growing number of refugees. This way, shelter in dignity can be provided across the EU to all those in need;
 10. encourages the creation of a multidimensional programme for refugees from Ukraine, which would support the safe development of this population in the European Union countries;
 11. welcomes the European Union's swift response to the emergency created by the Russian Federations' war on Ukraine and the European Commission CARE (Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe) and CARE+ packages, as well as flexibilities in the framework of *REACT-EU*, and underlines the potential benefits of involving directly regional and local authorities in the planning, management and implementation of aid packages;
 12. condemns Russian and all kind of propaganda and hate speech, which fuels the conflict and assists the perpetrators of war crimes;
 13. calls on the EU and its Member States to continue providing political support, economic help, and macro financial and technical assistance 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;
 14. looks forward to constructively discussing Ukraine's possible application to join the European Union;
 15. instructs its President to forward this declaration to the presidents of the main European Commission, European Parliament and the European Council.
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