



**Declaration of PES Development Ministers**  
**PES Development Ministerial Network**  
**6 March 2022**  
**Montpellier – France**

As we meet in Montpellier today, we are faced with the terrible consequences of an unprovoked and unjustified war at our doorstep. We condemn in the gravest manner Putin's aggression against Ukraine, and share our solidarity with all those afflicted by the conflict.

Putin's aggression against Ukraine requires all of our joint efforts to:

- **Ensure the protection of human life at all costs.** Too many lives have already been lost to this conflict. We must remember that the haunting statistics we see every day on the news are not empty numbers, but people.
- **Provide immediate humanitarian relief to all those affected by the war. This means safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed conflicts.** Most importantly, this means ensuring that our humanitarian aid will get to all those in need, regardless of their nationality. We strongly condemn the recent reports of people being denied aid, care or safe passage on the basis of their passports.
- **Coordinate our efforts to ensure faster, better results for our policies and send a univocal signal to the Russian Federation.** As Social Democrats, we have an opportunity to benefit from an unprecedentedly strong network. We have a duty to ensure a coherent response in line with our core values of democracy, freedom, equality, peace and justice.
- **Increase our capacity in terms of humanitarian aid.** Several EU Member States have already started reorganising their budgets to improve their ability to deliver on their humanitarian policies. Many governments have substantially increased their budgets altogether to face this crisis.
- **Promote solidarity among Member States.** The consequences of this war are already visible from the influx of refugees from Ukraine. Social Democrats have been leading the fight for a solidarity-based response system in the EU's common and asylum policy for the last decade. We will continue to work to ensure that mechanisms for responsibility sharing are in place.
- **Strengthen multilateral cooperation.** The international community across continents has spoken with powerful unity to denounce Russia's aggression. The success of that effort can be seen in this week's series of multilateral actions. This is not only the opportunity to appreciate the role of the United Nations and its organisation but also to strengthen and repower the international system.
- **Counter any attempt at dividing us through disinformation.** We have witnessed just how dangerous narratives can be. We welcome the decision by the EU to counter the Kremlin's propaganda and lies, and condemn any attempts at instrumentalising this war and the subsequent refugee crisis according to national interests and xenophobia.



- **Elaborate a long-term plan to grant the flow of humanitarian and development aid to Ukraine and the countries that will be indirectly suffering from the consequences of this war.** Forecasts about the fallout of the conflict are already catastrophic. As Development and Cooperation Ministers, we have a duty to our partners to address the consequences of this crisis coherently, assertively, and rapidly. We must also make sure that any help provided in the short term will lead to a sustainable development in the long term.
- **Mitigate the effects of the economic fallout of the conflict in the rest of the world.** Ukraine and the Russian Federation are among the largest food and energy exporters worldwide. The disruption of supply chains that stems from this conflict risks putting millions at a higher risk of food and energy insecurity, especially in developing countries. We will closely monitor the development of the situation to be prepared to act on it.
- **Maintain and strengthen our capabilities of intervention through Development Cooperation,** duly recognising its essential role in conflict prevention and peace building, through an inclusive dialogue with partner countries and thanks to its positive transformative influence on their societies.

We stand with Ukraine and will not give up on our fight for its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. At the same time, we stand with all Member States that are providing unprecedented help to refugees coming from Ukraine. As Social Democrats, we are at the forefront of the fight for global solidarity, equality and freedom. We will continue to pursue our goal of a fair, peaceful and prosperous future for all.

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<b>Meryame Kitir</b>	Minister for Development Cooperation - Belgium
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