



Supporting Ukraine one year into the war *PES Presidency Declaration adopted on 23 March 2023*

One year ago, Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine dramatically altered the course of European history. Social Democrats have united and risen up to the challenge with strength and determination, unequivocally condemning Russia's violation of international law and peace while implementing swift support measures for Ukraine.

The PES will continue to stand by Ukraine as long as it takes by supporting its military capabilities, by supporting the people who have been affected by war crimes and the humanitarian crisis that resulted from this horrific war, and by supporting its institutions in providing public services and rebuilding its infrastructure. We stand with the Ukrainian refugees in the European Union, we oppose any scaling down of support for them and call for quickly guaranteeing a prolongation of the Temporary Protection Directive beyond March 2024.

In our PES Congress resolution "Leading Europe through change" adopted in Berlin on 14 October 2022, we reiterated our call on the international community to prepare an assistance and recovery plan for Ukraine. We will continue to push the European Union to lead this reconstruction effort to help build back better and to support Ukraine in its green transition and in applying the principles of good governance and decentralization, which will pave its way to become member of the European Union.

It is crucial that the European Union provides Ukraine with the necessary tools and support to accelerate its reform process in line with its commitments as EU candidate country, in order to fulfil the conditions outlined in the European Commission's opinion on its EU membership application.

Peace negotiations can only take place on Ukraine's terms. To secure that this precondition is met at all times, the EU must have a leading role at the negotiation table.

Russia must not be allowed to win this war. We will continue to support the expansion and tough enforcement of sanctions until Russian forces are withdrawn entirely from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine and a just peace is re-established. We will also push the European Union to continuously review the current sanctions scheme and avoid any possibility of circumvention through third-country loopholes.

Accounts of war crimes, including sexual violence, are intolerable. The PES strongly supports the investigations being carried out and the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court as an independent body that impartially investigates and prosecutes war crimes committed by individuals and will staunchly continue to fight to ensure that war criminals are brought to justice, including through the establishment of an ad hoc international tribunal on the crime of aggression.

Moving forward, Social Democrats have a crucial role to play in shaping a progressive European Common Security and Defence Policy and the future of the European Union's Open



Strategic Autonomy, both based on cooperation, commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, and respect for the rules- and values-based multilateral system.

We stand ready to engage in dialogue with other regions of the world and support them against the fallout of this war, notably when it comes to ensuring global food security for the most vulnerable. The European Union needs to become a stronger global actor to counter Russian interference, manipulation, and exploitation in the EU neighbourhood and in the rest of the world.

On the 22nd July 2022, whilst in the midst of Russia's war of aggression, the Ukrainian Parliament ratified the Istanbul Convention. The Istanbul Convention then came into force in November 2022. This is a historic victory for women's rights as Ukraine ratified the Convention in the face of conflict, where women's rights and gender equality are usually pushed to the wayside. The Istanbul Convention is vital in the fight against gender-based violence, which is pervasive in times of peace and conflict. Yet, there are six EU Member States that have not ratified the Convention: Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia; and we are seeing the effects of the backlash on women's rights in Poland where the government is looking to withdraw from the Convention. Six years after signing, the EU is only now making steps to ratify the Convention. If Ukraine can ratify the Convention and continue to uphold women's rights during one of the most challenging points of their history, other countries have no excuse.

As PES, we will continue our efforts to ensure that the EU continues supporting Ukraine while it fights not only for its survival, but for peace in Europe and the respect of European principles and values.