



# RESOLUTION

European Economic and Social Committee

## **The war in Ukraine and its economic, social and environmental impact**

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The war in Ukraine and its economic, social and environmental impact

Rapporteurs:  
**Stefano MALLIA**  
**Oliver RÖPKE**  
**Séamus BOLAND**

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**EN**

Legal basis

Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure

Resolution

Adopted at plenary

24/03/2022

Plenary session No

568

Outcome of vote

(for/against/abstentions)

175/1/1

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

1. **strongly condemns the unilateral aggression against Ukraine** ordered by the President of the Russian Federation and the involvement of the Belarusian regime; stresses that the invasion of Ukraine by Russian military forces violates international rules and agreements in force and threatens European and global security; the invasion also directly violates the EU's primary aim "to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its people";
2. urges that the EU provide full support to ensure that all war crimes and crimes against humanity are recorded and processed through the International Criminal Court;
3. pays tribute to the **tremendous courage shown by the people of Ukraine** who are defending Ukraine against the Russian invaders; calls on the free world to support their struggle for peace and freedom with all means at its disposal;
4. calls on the EU and its like-minded international partners to remain united, to continue to show full **solidarity in responding to this unjustified and unprovoked war** and to identify a diplomatic path to cease hostilities; stresses the need for diplomatic action of an immediate ceasefire and construction of a real peace process with an active role of the EU Institutions. These actors should also step up pressure on the Russian regime by promptly imposing further sanctions and to use all other tools at their disposal to immediately stop military action by Russia on Ukrainian territory, completely withdraw Russian forces, and to restore peace, security and stability in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and to support societies who share our values;
5. believes it is of the utmost importance to the EU and the international community that no borders be changed through military means, and that no benefits be gained by the aggressor. The rule of law must be upheld, not the rights of the strongest, and full reparations paid to Ukraine.
6. supports and endorses key messages of the Resolution of the European Parliament of March 1<sup>st</sup> on Russian aggression against Ukraine including measures proposed there to immediately support Ukraine and its citizens in their fight for independence and freedom;
7. welcomes the actions of those European companies that have decided to withdraw from the Russian market and encourages other companies to also favour humanity and solidarity above short-term economic interests;
8. reiterates its **unequivocal support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity** of Ukraine, other Eastern Partnership countries, namely Moldova and Georgia, as well as all EU Member States, within their internationally recognised borders;
9. expresses its profound grief for all the **victims of the aggression**, children, women and men, for the destruction of cities and infrastructure, incalculable human suffering and environmental damage; regrets that millions of people have been forced to leave their houses and to seek shelter in safer places within Ukraine or in neighbouring countries; insists that aggressors are held accountable for their crimes;

10. urges to step up actions to strengthen Ukraine's position and sovereignty, as well as **humanitarian actions** that can support the Ukrainian people in granting access to essential items, in particular water, food, medicine and electricity; calls on all governments to do everything in their power to ensure **food supply and food safety** by providing food and clean water in war zones; **urges Russia to ensure humanitarian access to the population of Ukraine**; warns that many workers will not be receiving their salaries and people will not have access to their savings; in this regard calls for an adequate economic measures designed to prevent economic collapse;
11. welcomes **the active approach of all EU governments**, especially those of Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia, as well as the government of Moldova **in keeping their borders open** and providing means of evacuation, shelter, emergency assistance, medical assistance and asylum to people fleeing the war in Ukraine, including both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian nationals; calls on the Council and the Commission to provide extra funding for these countries as they are the primary points of entry of Ukrainian refugees to the EU; They will also remain prime countries of residence of Ukrainian refugees in the months to come;
12. calls once again for an **immigration policy that ensures that no country carries a disproportionate burden** and that such burden is shared equally amongst Member States;
13. supports **EU's commitment to assist refugees from Ukraine** as outlined in the Commission's communication "European solidarity with refugees and those fleeing war in Ukraine"<sup>1</sup> and stresses that the funds available through Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe and REACT<sup>2</sup> should be flexible and promptly available; welcomes the fact that the **EU has already activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism** and created logistical hubs in neighbouring countries to channel aid to Ukraine;
14. welcomes **the heartening solidarity shown by EU and neighbouring civil society organisations** and their unceasing actions since the very first day of the Russian aggression and stresses the need to **allocate EU financial support both to governments and civil society organisations** acting on the ground;
15. **Calls to 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 and that the needs of vulnerable groups, especially children, women, the elderly and people with disabilities, are addressed adequately; encourages hosting countries to welcome the creation and respect of same humanitarian corridors for all refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine regardless of their nationality;
16. acknowledges **the difficulties that hosting countries** might find in swiftly **integrating refugees in their labour markets**; underlines that the EU economies have the capacity to absorb the influx

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2022) 107 final - European solidarity with refugees and those fleeing war in Ukraine

<sup>2</sup> [COM\(2022\) 109 final](#) – Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE)

of people from Ukraine provided that the resettlement is managed properly; calls on **inclusion mechanisms to be gender- and age-responsive**; calls the European Labour Authority to monitor in line with its mandate refugees' labour market integration and to provide regular reports about it; reminds to this end the **potential of social and solidarity economy**, within the framework of welfare state services, to maintain and increase jobs even in times of crisis, and encourages the Member States to find solutions for better integration of the Ukrainian refugees to their labour market, recognises the specific situation of women and children in conflict zones and upon arrival in host countries, including the risks of exploitation and gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence and human trafficking; notes that the situation of Ukrainian citizens that were granted temporary protection in the European Union, or entitled to ask for such a status, will continue to be monitored and taken into consideration by the European Migration Forum;

17. demands enhanced **support for the Ukrainian civil society, both in and outside of Ukraine**; believes that the EU should consider involving Ukrainian civil society in all Ukraine-related discussions; Ukrainian civil society will be directly involved in alleviating the impact of war and in rebuilding the socio-economic fabric of the country; in this context, the EESC calls for consolidating and enhancing existing funding schemes designed to support civil society in Ukraine;
18. following recent statements by the President of the EC, calls on the EU Institutions and all Member States **to co-operate fully with Ukraine and to open all relevant EU funds and programmes to Ukraine**;
19. calls on the EU Institutions **to open a concrete dialogue with Ukraine regarding the accession process of the country to the European Union as soon as possible** in line with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union and on the basis of merit, and to provide immediate financial aid to secure humanitarian support to Ukraine, and urges **to open the same dialogue 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**; In the meantime, calls to continue to work towards integration of Ukraine into the EU single market along the lines of the Association Agreement;
20. expresses deep concern about the **massive use of propaganda and disinformation by the Russian government** to justify and obscure its aggression against Ukraine; in this regard, underlines the necessity to enhance EU's resilience to cyberattacks and to design a global strategy to counter disinformation; the EU must take the global lead in this regard;
21. stresses the need to **support independent Russian and Belarusian civil society and journalists** and keep communication channels open with them; strongly condemns the wave of repressions in Russia as well as arrests of peaceful protesters, gagging of the media, and shutting down of the voice of civil society;
22. calls for joint solidarity actions to boycott products and services from Russia; stresses **the need to break off cooperation with Russian companies and organisations that support Putin's**

**policies**; condemns circumventing collective boycott actions in an attempt to acquire any kind of advantage;

23. acknowledges that the war and all related measures, namely sanctions, will have a **socio-economic impact** on the Member States and the neighbouring countries, which the EU must be ready to assume; points out that the crisis shows the need to strengthen the internal market and its functioning; underlines the importance to offset losses incurred by European enterprises affected by sanctions and emphasises the need to run a thorough impact analysis of the sanctions, in order to be prepared to mitigate their economic and social consequences;
24. stresses that several **industry sectors** will be severely impacted; points out that besides energy, Russia and Ukraine have a significant weight in EU imports of metals, such as nickel, copper and iron and essential raw materials such as neon, palladium, titanium and platinum, which are critical for several strategic industries including defence and microchip production;
25. emphasizes the need to accelerate the development of a **strategic and technological autonomy for Europe** and calls on EU leaders to confirm their unity and determination to make the European Union a more independent and sovereign power by improving our defence capabilities and limiting our dependencies in energy, critical raw materials and food;
26. underlines the importance of reducing the **EU's energy dependency on third parties, in particular on Russia**; calls for a viable plan to diversify the energy sources within the Member States' energy mix and welcomes the proposals made thereof by the Versailles Declaration<sup>3</sup>; acknowledges that security and sustainability of energy supply can be fully achieved in the long term only by boosting the usage of low-carbon or carbon-free energy sources, with greater use of local and renewable energy sources; advocates for accelerating research investments to develop new clean technologies in order to ensure a resilient and sustainable future of the EU energy system;
27. underlines the need for a **differentiation of fiscal strategies across Member States**, with a view to preserving debt sustainability, particularly in member states with high public debt. Member states with low and medium debt levels should prioritize expansion of public investment; stresses the importance of prioritising **expansion of public investment to enhance the resilience** of the EU economy;
28. expresses concerns as regards the emergency situation of significant parts of the **transport sector** and urges the Commission to pay due attention to the crisis of the transport sector caused by extremely high fuel and electricity costs when conceiving the Temporary Crisis Framework mentioned in the communication *REPower EU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy*<sup>4</sup> and calls for caution when relaxing regulatory procedures to ensure it does not weaken social and environmental standards;

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<sup>3</sup> Versailles Declaration, adopted at the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government on 10 and 11 March 2022 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54773/20220311-versailles-declaration-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [COM\(2022\) 108 final](#) – REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy

29. stresses that the conflict will inevitably carry severe consequences for the EU's agri-food sector, which will require additional support; to this end; underlines that the EU must reinforce its commitment to deliver on **sustainable food systems** while guaranteeing the affordability of quality food for everyone; in particular, the EU must improve its food security by reducing dependencies on key imported agricultural products and inputs; moreover, consumers in all EU Member States will be faced with significant increases in food and energy prices which could increase levels of poverty within the EU;
30. stresses that Ukraine and Russia are significant exporters of several agricultural products, such as grain and oilseeds; notes that the disruption of exports from these countries has already led to **huge global increases in the prices of agricultural commodities** and that the consequences are felt especially in the world's poorest countries and the poorest people are the ones who will suffer the most;
31. stresses that the impacts of the war should not come to the detriment of climate action and sustainability, as provided for in the UN Agenda 2030 on sustainable development which is, first and foremost, an agenda of peace, security and poverty reduction; underlines the need to progress towards implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 and a just transition, through the **European Green Deal**, emphasising that exceptional derogations only can be granted for a limited time;
32. considers that the **environmental impacts caused by the conflict**, as a consequence of bombings, oil/gas leaks, incidents in chemical factories, or nuclear plants, are of major concern, for both the Ukrainian and EU population; stresses that the EU must help to protect and restore environmental damage caused by the war and sanction environmental crimes, as they will inevitably have long lasting consequences;
33. stresses the **need to maintain solidarity and further develop common European responses** to share the burden of the economic impact and suggests designing a flexible European instrument; notes that, in the case of the most affected countries, the processing and revision of the national Recovery and Resilience Plans might be necessary, particularly in light of the concerning stagflation risk; recognizes that all EU Member States and their citizens will be directly affected by the invasion of Ukraine and that the human cost and repercussions for Ukrainians will be incalculable, hence, the necessity for intra-EU solidarity and for long-term EU solidarity with Ukraine;
34. welcomes the commitment expressed in the Versailles Declaration<sup>5</sup> to increase the use of the **European Peace Facility** instrument; stresses that the EU should move towards a stronger political integration, which could support a common foreign policy and calls on the Member States to immediately start working on implementing a genuinely common and effective **defence system** that would significantly strengthen Europe's ability to defend itself;
35. acknowledges that the occupation of the nuclear power stations is raising concerns about **nuclear safety** for the local population and Europe as a whole and calls for full cooperation with all

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<sup>5</sup> Versailles Declaration, adopted at the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government on 10 and 11 March 2022 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54773/20220311-versailles-declaration-en.pdf>

involved actors and with the International Agency for Atomic Energy to monitor the situation and pre-empt any possible escape of radioactivity;

36. stresses **the need for political leaders to be clear in their communication with EU citizens** and explain the cost of war; emphasises that peace has a price and we all have to pay that price which must be shared across Member States;
37. calls for the **EU and its Member States to prepare an adequate assistance and recovery plan for Ukraine** to support the Ukrainian economy and the reconstruction of its destroyed infrastructure; emphasises that the Russian Federation must bear the responsibility for the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure, including civilian and residential buildings, as well as the significant economic losses, and will be required to compensate the damage caused by its aggressive actions;
38. commits to **monitoring the situation closely, by encouraging exchanges of information on the support of European CSOs** on the ground, by **encouraging a genuine dialogue with Ukrainian CSOs**, including employers' organisations and trade unions, through their permanent dialogue mechanisms; commits to monitoring the situation of the refugees on the ground as well as in the neighbouring countries, giving full support to the Ukrainian people.

Brussels, 24 March 2022

Christa Schweng

The president of the European Economic and Social Committee

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