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### **Statement from MEDIATIZED EU regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine**

The European project is an outcome of the two world wars that were detrimental for Europe and the world. United in their pledge to prevent future wars, European leaders decided to build a strong union based on solidarity that would pursue the values of freedom, peace, democracy and the rule of law. Russia's invasion of Ukraine severely undermines these values and principles in Europe and on a global scale. We, the academic community implementing the European Commission-funded MEDIATIZED EU project, call the European Union bodies for action to defend freedom, peace and democracy in Ukraine and in Europe!

It is not by chance our consortium is implementing research under the H2020 RIA call "The Changing Media Landscapes and Europeanization". We believe that this call has been driven by the European Commission's goal to contribute to the Europeanization process in wider Europe. We also believe that social sciences should be truly "social" and contribute to the improvement of our societies. It should be done not only by producing innovative research, but also by enacting its findings in everyday life, inspiring various audiences to reflect on the ongoing processes, and encouraging policymakers to take necessary actions. Social scientists working on Europeanization themes cannot remain silent when the European project is endangered. As noted above, the European project was initiated by those who aspired to defend peace and freedom in Europe. This is what Ukraine is fighting for. We cannot leave Ukraine alone in this battle, but we should stand with the Ukrainian people in exercising their right to self-determination and their right to sovereignty, including their right to pursue their European aspirations freely.

Sadly enough, many in Europe, especially the countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics, as well as Eastern Partnership states, have anticipated the current scenario though they have not been active enough to prevent it. Russia has been systematically using its "soft" and, later, "sharp" power to discredit neighbours with European aspirations, as well as disseminating anti-Western propaganda and fake news to mislead the local population in these countries and wider Europe and to delegitimize liberal democracy as a form of governance. Now Russia has started a war of aggression against Ukraine that has brought an immense physical and psychological harm to the peaceful population of Ukraine within only a few days.

Beyond the implication for Europe, Russia intends to change the patterns of the international system, where war and use of force are becoming the norm. First of all, this is a flagrant violation of the UN Charter. Aggression is a violation of a peremptory norm of international law, and all States are under the obligation to cooperate, through lawful means, to bring an end to this situation and reverse its consequences.





We cannot allow Russia to defeat Ukraine. We cannot allow States neighbouring Russia to live under constant pressure and fear of war and loss of sovereignty. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we cannot allow an authoritarian regime to terrorize Europe because of its imperial claims. Today, Ukraine is not only defending its own sovereignty, it is defending a free Europe and it is defending the right of every nation, big or small, to exercise its basic right to self-determination. Hence all of us are Ukrainians today.

There are a few but meaningful measures the European Union governing bodies can immediately take:

- In order for the EU to truly enact the values it is based on, its governing bodies should take more decisive actions in restoring European security and contribute to the ceasefire and putting a stop to Russia's aggressive actions. The EU countries should be especially vocal and active in solving the current conflict, as they know Ukraine is being punished for its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.
- As economic sanctions against Russia are not expected to yield immediate results, additional measures must be adopted by the EU leaders to immediately prevent Russia's further military actions. EU leaders should take a joint stand against Russian President Putin and confirm their resolute will to support Ukraine.
- The EU leaders must deliver a clear message that the EU stands with Eastern European countries in the exercise of their right to self-determination, including having EU aspirations, beyond its public rhetoric and monetary support.
- Legal measures to prohibit incitement to hatred and violence via media should be used actively to limit the danger posed to human life, peace and public order by RT and other Russian state-funded media. Maximum support should be provided to measures to debunk fake news and to provide objectively verified information via various media channels.
- The EU's sanctions should not only target Russian high-ranking officials but also other influential groups, including businessmen and other powerful pro-government figures and institutions, who actively contribute to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Sanctions should be multilateral and target key Russian security apparatus and other strategic sectors.

We call upon the EU to work intensively with other international organisations and other individual States to encourage them to adopt sanctions and other measures against Russia. The multilateral character of sanctions is a necessary element for them to be effective.

We also call upon the EU to denounce Russia's recognition of the breakaway territories of Donetsk and Luhansk and Russia's annexation of Crimea, which have no validity under international law, and constitute a grave breach of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. The EU must cooperate with the international community to restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine in an expeditious manner.

We call on the European Commission and the European Union to stand with Ukraine!

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