

Recommendation 2228 (2022)¹

Consequences of the Russian Federation's continued aggression against Ukraine: role and response of the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Recalling that the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine is a serious violation of international law and a serious breach of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1), the Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the decision of the Committee of Ministers, taken on 16 March 2022, to exclude the Russian Federation from membership of the Council of Europe, in line with Assembly [Opinion 300 \(2022\)](#).
2. The role of the Council of Europe in relation to this crisis does not, however, end with the Russian Federation's exclusion from the Organisation. The Council of Europe should be part of the international community's effort to exert maximum pressure on the Russian Federation to cease the hostilities, withdraw its troops from the sovereign territory of Ukraine and be held accountable for the crimes and damage it has inflicted throughout this continued aggression.
3. Furthermore, the Council of Europe should continue to give proof of unity and resolve by being in the front line to support Ukraine. To this end, the Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to establish, without delay, a package of immediate assistance measures in response to the needs expressed by the Ukrainian authorities, also taking into account the following priorities:
 - 3.1. strengthening the resilience and capacity of public institutions to carry out their responsibilities and to enforce the Council of Europe standards, notably in the areas of the rule of law, with specific support for the judiciary and the prosecution authorities, as well as in the area of freedom of expression, with the aim of combating Russian propaganda and disinformation;
 - 3.2. taking all the necessary practical measures to ensure that Ukraine can continue to be an active member of the Council of Europe and participate in its activities despite the war of aggression;
 - 3.3. supporting the gathering of evidence and the investigations into alleged human rights and humanitarian law violations and other international crimes, by strengthening the capacity of the Ukrainian prosecution and law-enforcement authorities to document and collect evidence, in particular on gender-based violence, which requires swift action, and by enhancing the capacity of non-governmental organisations, journalists and civil society to interact with these authorities;
 - 3.4. addressing the needs of those who are in a vulnerable situation, including displaced persons, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, victims of sexual violence, victims of trauma, children, including separated or unaccompanied children, and potential or actual victims of trafficking;
 - 3.5. contributing to ensuring freedom of information, freedom of the media and the protection of journalists.
4. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to consider the appointment of a special representative on the consequences of the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

1. *Assembly debate* on 27 April 2022 (13th and 14th sitting) (see [Doc. 15506](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Frank Schwabe). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 27 April 2022 (14th sitting). See also [Resolution 2433 \(2022\)](#).



5. In addition, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to consider a package of assistance measures to be implemented in the aftermath of the conflict, to be developed in close consultation with the Ukrainian authorities, in response to their evolving needs and in co-ordination with the Council of Europe's international counterparts.

6. The Assembly reiterates its view that the Council of Europe should continue to support and engage with human rights defenders, democratic forces, independent media and civil society from Belarus and the Russian Federation, two non-member States who are involved in this aggression. This policy would enable the Organisation to be a community of values and would reflect the importance of engaging with non-governmental organisations and civil society, as acknowledged in several Council of Europe ministerial meetings. In this context, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to ensure that:

6.1. Belarusian and Russian human rights defenders, democratic forces, media and civil society organisations, which respect the values and principles of the Organisation, including the territorial integrity of sovereign member States, can be invited to participate in Council of Europe meetings under the same conditions as their counterparts from Council of Europe member States;

6.2. representatives of Belarusian democratic forces and civil society are engaged in the work of Council of Europe bodies, in line with the Committee of Ministers' decision to enhance the Organisation's relations with Belarusian civil society and the opposition in exile;

6.3. key Council of Europe documents, publications and web pages are available in Russian;

6.4. the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists continues to monitor the situation of freedom of the media and the safety of journalists in Belarus and the Russian Federation;

6.5. Belarusian and Russian independent legal professionals and human rights defenders can be informed about and receive training on Council of Europe standards and instruments, and have access to Council of Europe material, courses and training opportunities.

7. The Assembly also invites the Committee of Ministers to assess the feasibility of setting up a dedicated programme to enable Belarusian and Russian human rights defenders, democratic forces, media and civil society organisations which respect the values and principles of the Organisation, including the territorial integrity of sovereign member States, to be actively involved in the activities of the Council of Europe.

8. The Assembly reiterates its support for the organisation of a 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe to reaffirm the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and elaborate a new vision for the Organisation in the context of the European multilateral architecture. The summit should involve high-level representatives of the European Union and address challenges such as:

8.1. promoting democratic security, which is also a precondition for peace and stability;

8.2. tackling the root causes of the backsliding of democracy;

8.3. revitalising democracy through innovation and greater citizen involvement;

8.4. establishing effective early warning mechanisms in order to take prompt, decisive and collective action in the face of threats to the rule of law, democratic standards and human rights protection.

9. The Assembly calls on the governments of Council of Europe member States, and the Committee of Ministers as a whole, to mobilise and show their continued trust in the Council of Europe by ensuring that it has the necessary resources to carry out its mandate. The Assembly also encourages stepping up voluntary contributions to ensure that the Council of Europe can provide assistance and support to Ukraine, both immediately and once the Russian Federation's war of aggression is over, and to strengthen the overall operational capacity of the Organisation.