

**CM Commemoration of the 3rd Anniversary
of the Full Scale Aggression against Ukraine**

24 February 2025, Strasbourg

Speech by Theodoros Rousopoulos
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Dear Chair of the Committee of Ministers,

Dear Secretary General,

Mr Deputy Secretary General,

Ambassadors,

Dear colleagues,

Today, we stand in solidarity with a nation that has been under attack since 2014, facing full-scale war since 2022. Ukraine has lost 20% of its territory, suffered immense destruction, and, above all, endured the tragic loss of countless lives.

Prisoners of war remain in captivity, civilians are illegally detained, and families continue searching for deported children. Their return is not just a moral imperative — it is our collective duty.

This war is not only against Ukraine; it is an assault on our democratic values, the international order, and our shared European identity.

Earlier today, during the commemoration ceremony, I spoke about the historical roots of just peace.

Now, I want to focus on the future, because we—the Parliamentary Assembly and you, the Committee of Ministers — are shaping history. Our commitment to accountability for this aggression, rooted in justice and compensation, is becoming a reality.

I am particularly encouraged by the full operationalisation of the Register of Damages, a crucial initiative I recently discussed at the Conference of the Parties.

Another significant step is the finalisation of the ad hoc tribunal for the crime of aggression. The Core Group is working diligently on its Statute, and its next meeting will be held in Strasbourg in a few weeks.

We must seize this momentum. In that regard, I encourage the Committee of Ministers to use the upcoming Ministerial Conference, hosted by the Luxembourg Presidency in May, to finalise this unprecedented initiative.

The work on compensation mechanisms also continues, and the Assembly stands ready to provide expertise to ensure its completion by the end of this year.

It is always encouraging to see how the Parliamentary Assembly's initiatives take shape through strong cooperation with the Committee of Ministers. As President, I fully support these efforts.

A few weeks ago, we debated Ukraine's situation in our hemicycle. Some may call it another discussion, but once again, our Assembly demonstrated leadership, making clear that Europe must reject any attempt to decide Ukraine's future without Ukraine.

Diplomatic efforts for peace must be grounded in "peace through strength," as defined by the Ukrainian authorities. A just and lasting peace requires robust security guarantees for Ukraine, and any negotiations must be approached from a position of resilience and strong defence capacity.

The Assembly has made its stance clear: European states must enhance their self-sufficiency and strategic autonomy to strengthen defence resilience and regional security.

We all want an end to the suffering in Ukraine — the return of displaced people, prisoners of war, and the thousands of children forcibly removed from their homeland, their language, and their culture.

But peace must be based on justice and international law. Any other approach would fail, undermining the very foundations of our shared values and European security.

Ukraine needs a united and strong Europe. Likewise, Europe needs a secure future for Ukraine.

The outcome of this war will shape European and global security for generations to come.

This must be our common position and our ultimate objective.

Thank you.