

2nd Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform

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President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for inviting the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to this Second Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform, after the first meeting in Zagreb last year. Good to see so many of you here again in Prague! I also met many of you in the recent Council of Europe's Conference of Presidents of Parliaments in Dublin. There too, our focus was – and stay – on Ukraine.

We continue to condemn the Russian Federation's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine and of the serious, persistent and widespread atrocities and other violations of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights for which the Russian Federation is responsible, through its political and military leadership, military forces and proxies.

When the Russian military crossed Ukraine's borders, it also crossed the red lines of the Council of Europe. Therefore, Europe's oldest and broadest multilateral organisation immediately suspended Russia's membership on the next day and expelled its biggest member state within 3 weeks.

Since then we have actively pursued the agenda of accountability of the Russian Federation for all wrongful acts it has done in and against Ukraine. It is our utmost priority to bring peace to Ukraine and to end this horrible war, but the war cannot end without justice being done to its victims. Therefore, we keep pushing the governments of our member states to establish a comprehensive accountability system. In May this year, I met with the leaders of the 46 European countries in Reykjavik for the 4th Summit of the Council of Europe. In Reykjavik, following the call by our Assembly, we agreed to establish the Registry of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine – the first international legal instrument to address the consequences of this aggression. While welcoming this historic decision in Reykjavik, we now call in Prague on member and non-member States to swiftly advance on future steps towards accountability and justice, namely the establishment of a comprehensive compensation mechanism for the damages recorded in the Register of Damage, and a compensation fund to pay out the decisions for reparation of damage. Our Assembly who was the first to call for setting up an ad hoc international tribunal for the crime of aggression and we continue to actively support all international initiatives that could lead to its establishment.

Restoring territorial integrity of Ukraine is also an integral part of delivering justice to the country and its people. We condemn the attempted illegal annexation by the Russian Federation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as the attempted annexation of parts of the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine. All these unilateral acts violate international law, and pose a direct threat to international security with serious consequences for the global community.

This war should never become a normality for us. We should never forget about the ongoing terrible suffering of the Ukrainian people.

The territorial integrity of Ukraine must be fully restored within its internationally recognised borders. We must ensure Ukraine's reconstruction, based on strong and resilient public institutions at all levels, good democratic governance and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in the framework of the respect of the rule of law. Only then we will achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

In conclusion, the international community should not lose sight of its primary objective: remain united, to stop the war of aggression and to win peace; a peace which is comprehensive, just and lasting, and ensuring that the rule of law prevails over the rule of force.

Thank you for your attention.