



EEB Statement Concerning the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

- adopted by the EEB Board on 3 March 2022 -

The EEB strongly condemns the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine launched on 24 February 2022. The attack is an unacceptable breach of international law and a violation of the United Nations Charter which requires its Member States to refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any state. We sharply condemn the inexcusable attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The invasion is unprovoked and unjustified.

As an organisation that believes in a world where equal, just, peaceful and democratic societies can prosper, we are shocked and saddened by the devastating impact of military action on both people and the environment. We stand in solidarity with all people living in Ukraine and all those affected by the conflict. The EEB extends its condolences to all those who have lost dear ones, have been injured or have suffered material losses. We affirm our support to the over one million people who have already fled Ukraine and welcome EU Member States' decision to grant unbureaucratic access to the Union territory. We call on all parties to ensure the safe passage for all affected by the attacks, regardless of their nationality or the colour of their skin. We also applaud and stand with all those in the Russian Federation who resist this unjust war, protest for peace and face repression and arrest.

This is the most significant political and military crisis the European continent has faced in decades. There has never been such concern about the risk of a nuclear war since the end of the Cold War. We call on the Russian Federation to cease all military action, withdraw its forces and use diplomatic and non-violent means to pursue its objectives. We call on third parties to prevent a further military escalation of the conflict. We strongly support the right of all people to live in peace, harmony and democracy, free from repression and dictatorship. People in Ukraine and every other state must be able to freely choose their political and economic system and relations in the region and internationally.

The EEB stands in solidarity with its member organisations and their supporters in Ukraine, as well as wider civil society, people who have been working tirelessly for a sustainable

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future for their country. We offer our support so they can continue their work, and/ or work towards peace in their country.

The conflict in Ukraine is intimately linked to the EU's dependency on fossil fuel imports. [More than 40% of our gas](#) and around [25% of crude oil imports](#) come from Russia. This energy dependency has compromised the EU's agency to respond to the Russian government's long-standing violations of human rights, threats to peace and democracy across the region, and its disrespect of the sovereignty rights of its neighbouring countries. Putin has deliberately weaponised oil and gas and his regime's energy dominance over the EU. In Russia, oil and gas provide close to [40% of the federal budget revenue](#) and [60% of exports](#). Oil is an even greater source of revenue than gas with 80 billion Euro destined from Europe in 2022. The increase in [revenues from oil maps closely to the increase in military spending in the Russian Federation](#). The Russian fossil fuel industry is a key provider of the Federation's military budget and has fuelled not only this war but also conflicts in Georgia and Syria. These funding streams must be dried out.

The crisis underlines the urgent need for Europe to accelerate the transition to self-sufficient and renewable energy sources and to reduce its energy demand through substantially increased investments in energy efficiency improvements, in particular energy renovations of buildings and public and active transport infrastructures, as well as through circular economy efforts and fostering solutions focused on the sufficiency principle. These together will reduce EU dependency on Russian fossil fuels and help restore the EU's political agency. Progressing with an ambitious European Green Deal, in particular the Fit-for-55 package, is a core part of achieving energy sovereignty. Europe's nature and climate must not be a price to pay for this war.

We welcome the German government's decision to halt the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as a first step, and the European Parliament's call for stricter sanctions. However, beyond limiting gas imports, sanctions are needed on all the regime's fossil fuel exports. Fossil fuels cannot be exempted from Russia's exclusion from SWIFT. Russian fossil fuel assets must be frozen and multinational fossil fuel companies should stop production in Russia. Direct and indirect investments in fossil fuel infrastructure in Russia must come to a standstill.

We call on the European Commission and Member States to rapidly present a strategy for the short term to cut down oil and gas demand and to invest more in renewable energy sources and a range of energy efficiency and sufficiency measures, to end fossil fuel imports from the Russian Federation. We are gravely concerned that a leaked EU Commission strategy responding to the energy crisis does not mention oil.

The Commission must withdraw its proposal to include gas as green in the European Sustainable Finance Taxonomy. Negotiations on the Fit-for-55 package, a wider roll-out of the European Green Deal, and measures on industrial decarbonisation pathways must be strengthened to fast-track decarbonisation and independence from fossil energies. Member States must revise their National Recovery and Resilience Plans and their national energy and climate plans to accelerate the phase-out of gas. The plans need to be revised to allow for the rapid deployment of sustainable local alternatives to gas, especially for households and SMEs. A 100% renewables future is possible by 2040 and this conflict is a stark reminder of the importance of committing to a future beyond fossil fuels.

We call on all Europeans to join efforts in stopping fossil fuel imports from Russia. By leaving their cars at home and lowering room heating temperatures and warm water use, we all can individually play our role to force Putin back to the negotiation table. At the same time, the Commission and governments must ensure that those already suffering under high energy and transport costs are not further left behind.

Next to oil and gas, revenue from logging may be a loophole that continues to fuel this war. In 2021, the export of timber and wood products from the Russian Federation was at USD13.9 billion. Western countries are the major markets for this wood, either directly or indirectly. The Russian Federation is also a major exporter of mineral and metal resources to the EU, including palladium, aluminium, nickel and copper, which generate significant state revenue. We call on the EU to extend sanctions to wood and mineral and metal resources.

It is also critical that all safe havens for Russian money are shut down immediately. For example, over EUR 34 billion is held by opaque Russian-linked shell companies registered at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Ireland. Recently published research showed that EUR 118 billion had been funnelled between 2005 and 2017 by Russian entities through so-called section 110 trusts based at the IFSC alone. Across Europe, we are calling for a deep and meaningful response to the financial interests of the Russian Federation, not just a cosmetic one.

Every military conflict has severe impacts on the environment: soil, water and air are contaminated, leaving behind a toxic legacy, often for generations to come. In Chernobyl, critical staff struggle with the maintenance of the site. Nuclear power stations and nuclear waste storage sites are at risk from shelling. Hundreds of other industrial sites may be targeted, potentially causing severe environmental and health impacts for those living nearby. Since the invasion started, fuel depots and gas lines have been hit, and there have been reports of storage with chemicals burning. Russian attacks on munitions depots have already led to the dispersal of heavy metals and hazardous materials, posing additional human health and environmental risks.



We call on all parties to prevent environmental contamination and the destruction of ecosystems that hinder peace processes and cause long-lasting and harmful legacies.

When a peace process for Ukraine gets underway, it must involve civil society organisations, including environmental citizens' organisations, to address the ecological consequences of conflict. In full respect of Security Council Resolution 1325, women, who are often left out from conflict resolution, must participate equally. Conflict response must also cover environmental assistance to address the consequences of conflict on people and ecosystems, and support clean-up and restoration efforts.

We are concerned for those who are more vulnerable in this deteriorating crisis because of their role in the defence of human rights and the environment. As environmental citizens organisations, we are particularly concerned for environmental human rights defenders in Ukraine. We wish to highlight the [letter](#) from the Chair of the Compliance Committee of the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) to the Foreign Ministers of all Parties to the Convention reminding them of their obligations under Article 3(8) to ensure environmental defenders are protected from persecution. We also welcome the further [letter](#) on behalf of the Aarhus Bureau, from the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties supporting the call from the Compliance Committee.

Our thoughts are with our colleagues in Ukraine and all those affected by conflict. We are committed to using our voice for peace to soon return, so we can continue our work, together for a sustainable future for all.