



# EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP NETWORK

## STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ELN ON RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

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Russia's invasion of Ukraine will have devastating consequences for the security of all of us in Europe and beyond. It is a totally unjustified attack, in gross violation of Article 2 of the UN Charter which commits Russia to respect the sovereign equality of other states, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. President Putin's resort to force sets Russia-West relations back by decades.

The European Leadership Network is an independent pan-European Network of leaders, including Russian and Ukrainian leaders. While we cannot speak for its members, and the organisation itself holds no formal positions, we know we voice the feelings of many in expressing our distress and condemnation about what is happening. We stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Those who believe in democracy and the international rule of law should support the harshest sanctions against those who are responsible for this outrage and its inevitable, tragic consequences.

Our Network embodies the principles of dialogue and mutual security. For more than a decade, we have supported adherence to international laws and norms, peaceful solutions for Ukraine, and structured diplomacy between Russia and NATO, to reduce the risks of escalation, prevent existential conflict, and find better, safer ways to live together.

Localised conflict in Donbas could be resolved through established international processes, which were being revived, not exhausted. Moreover, important discussions were beginning on the larger picture of European security architecture and Russia's role in it. Such discussions, which President Putin has sought for years, have been subverted by his choice of war over diplomacy. And he has challenged Ukraine's identity as a nation state, in terms that are profoundly alarming for other post-Soviet states and for wider Europe.

We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities; the resumption of serious diplomacy with full transparency about interests, positions and needs; and respect for the state of Ukraine's sovereign right to choose its own government and its own national security path. Russia and the West must then consider the future they want to bequeath to their next generations:

- Russia should be able to thrive in partnership in the Euro-Atlantic community, without feeling threatened by the military postures of others. But that opportunity must apply equally to all, including Ukraine, if the "indivisibility of security" envisaged by the Helsinki Final Act and OSCE, and endorsed by Russia, is to have meaning.
- There will be a natural and understandable reaction in the West to isolate Russia, cutting off direct communication and interactions. But at this moment of high military tension, communication, arms control and continuing political space for diplomacy are more important than ever for effective deterrence.