

ESN stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine

Statement of ESN International



The 24th of February 2022 marks one of the darkest days in the recent history of Europe and the entire world due to shameful aggression by the Russian military against Ukraine. This act of war constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and goes against core principles of the United Nations charter that are key for a peaceful international community.

The Erasmus Student Network conveys its deepest solidarity with the Ukrainian people and expresses its total condemnation of this unwarranted military aggression that constitutes a breach of peace carried out by the Russian government against Ukraine. We stand together with our Ukrainian friends in these extremely challenging times and call upon European and world leaders and EU institutions to support the Ukrainian people in all ways possible.

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The Erasmus Student Network has among its core values in the idea of Europe as an area of peace and cultural exchange. Our continent has lived through enough dark days due to autocratic-led aggression. The use of military force has no place in our time. As a youth organisation working on international student mobility, we believe that exchanges build intercultural understanding and can improve geopolitical relations, gradually helping to build a better world. Our volunteers around Europe work tirelessly to promote understanding and solidarity among people from all countries and backgrounds. Efforts built up with the investment of time and resources by young people and volunteers through our network or other youth organisations are expunged with the acts of aggression and war we see today.

Our Network is committed to supporting Ukrainian students and young people across Europe in all ways possible. Ukrainian mobile students abroad should be offered support adjusted to their need and their safety should be guaranteed. If needed, visa periods should be extended if students wish to remain in their hosting cities.

ESN Ukraine joined the Erasmus Student Network in 2019, and since then, has been supporting hundreds of students coming to Ukraine to discover their country and learn about their history, as well as engage Ukrainian students and inform them about opportunities abroad. ESN's aim is to safeguard the rights and safety of students and our volunteer members, calling for leaders around Europe to ensure emergency support for displaced students and young people. Even today, ESN Ukraine continues to support international students who are currently still in the country, as they have always done. We thank them for their commitment and work to support others in the most difficult of times.

The Erasmus Student Network would like to stress that young people in Russia are not its Government. They are also suffering the consequences of decisions taken above their heads, undoing the work civil society organisations have built within Russia. Educational and cultural exchanges with young Russians and civil society help to plant the seeds of a better future of peace and cooperation, and restricting these opportunities would be detrimental for the development of a vibrant civil society that can push against these terrible acts. Russian students abroad should also be supported in these difficult times for them.

The act of war against Ukraine does not only affect Ukrainians: it is a direct attack against all peace-loving citizens of Europe and the world and an affront to all of us who believe in a world based on solidarity and cooperation. We encourage everyone who can support Ukraine in all

ways possible. We are already seeing great signs of solidarity within our Network, with volunteers from neighbouring countries stepping up to support displaced students and their loved ones. We thank all ESNers who are committed to supporting affected students and young people by the aggression.

Young Ukrainians have continuously worked for a better future which is now being stolen from them by terrible and unprecedented aggression. It is a time to show solidarity and commitment to a Europe of peace and human rights. The future of a peaceful and democratic Europe is now at stake if we do not support Ukraine.