



Declaration of the Speakers and Presidents of Parliament of the G7 G7 Speakers' Conference, Berlin, 15 to 17 September 2022

I. Ukraine

We, the Speakers and Presidents of Parliament of the G7 states, condemn in the strongest possible terms the war of aggression in breach of international law, waged over the past six months by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. We call on the Russian Federation to cease hostilities immediately and withdraw its forces from Ukraine. We affirm our unreserved support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders. We are committed to upholding the authority of international law, including international humanitarian law. We firmly believe that this crisis, as with further crises, can only be overcome by the international community acting in concert. We are determined to play our part in restoring peace in Europe and ensuring, by diplomatic and multilateral means, lasting stability on the continent. In this context, we urge that the option of a future Peace Conference based on the full reaffirmation of the rights of the Ukrainian people and Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, be explored.

We are pleased that we are able to welcome the President of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada, Ruslan Stefanchuk, to our meeting. We stand alongside the Verkhovna Rada and its freely elected members. Just as the G7 Heads of State and Government did at the Elmau Summit, we declare our unwavering solidarity with Ukraine. We welcome the measures taken by our governments to apply far-reaching sanctions against Russia and Belarus and to support the government and the people of Ukraine politically and directly with budgetary aid, humanitarian assistance and security support. These also include measures for the recovery of Ukraine. We support Ukraine as it continues along the road towards the European Union having been granted candidate status in June 2022.

We observe with concern that the war of aggression has brought severe changes to the security situation in Europe and all over the world, and are aware that security strategies and mechanisms must be further revised and adapted. The Russian war of aggression has led to a huge rise in the price and scarcity of food in many countries, along with a sharp increase in energy costs. The export of agricultural products from Ukraine must be made possible unconditionally. Moreover, solutions need to be found in our countries as to how to end dependency on Russian energy imports without endangering the ongoing transition towards more climate-neutral economies in response to the climate emergency. Our citizens require adequate support in order to provide them with relief in the face of rising prices.

We urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease military activities in the areas surrounding nuclear power plants and to enable full inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency to take place. We consider an extensive investigation of the war crimes committed in Ukraine to be absolutely necessary and are thus undertaking efforts to advance the criminal prosecution of these. All perpetrators of these war crimes, their commanders and political and military leaders must be brought to justice. In particular, we affirm our commitment to fighting disinformation and propaganda disseminated by Russia.

II. Strengthening democracy through education

An understanding and appreciation of representative democracy cannot be taken for granted. Civic education can and should, therefore, play a part in bringing the values of parliamentary democracies closer to people and in particular to the younger generation. In light of increasing digitalisation, teaching media and communication skills is also part of this. Civic education should start at an early age. It should make young people more familiar with the free democratic basic order and its fundamental values: sovereignty of the people, separation of powers, the rule of law, freedom of speech, protection of minorities, pluralism and human rights.

Worldwide, a decline of democracies can be observed, while at the same time the number of autocratic systems and parliaments that are not freely elected are on the rise. We view this with great concern. Our countries, too, are not immune from antidemocratic tendencies and anti-Semitic and right-wing as well as religious or ideological extremist incidents which endanger societal cohesion. In many places, the downward trend can also be observed in voter turnout. Different social groups make use of their right to vote in different ways. We wish to lobby for greater interest in democratic processes and a strengthening of trust in democratic institutions. All measures that are able to contribute towards a sustainable increase in voter turnout should be discussed and examined in our parliaments.

Parliaments can take an active role in increasing awareness of their role and strengthening interest in democratic processes. In addition, they can promote the civic education work carried out by other actors such as public education providers, foundations or non-governmental organisations, and work together with these. Parliaments have an important function as role models and need to ensure the transparency and comprehensibility of parliamentary mechanisms, open their doors more widely to the citizens and mobilise them to protect democratic achievements and values. Positive steps have recently been made with new forms of civic participation, in particular with a view to promote the respectful treatment of one another and a culture of constructive discussion. These include citizens' assemblies, in which citizens discuss responses to questions presented to them by Parliament or the government – as a means of enhancing parliamentary democracy. We want to intensify civic education with the involvement of our parliaments and the goal of greater involvement on the part of the citizens.

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