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Peace for Ukraine and Europe

Statement by IJAB concerning Russia's aggression against Ukraine

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25 February 2022

On the morning of 24 February 2022, Russian troops staged a comprehensive attack on Ukraine. We are horrified at this course of events, which represents a blatant breach of international law. In addition, Russia has violated all bi- and multilateral treaties – to which it is itself a signatory – that hitherto guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity. This is not just an attack on Ukraine. It is also an attack on Europe's peaceful order and on all democratic, free and open societies.

Our thoughts are with the people in Ukraine who are vulnerable to these acts of aggression. Our sympathies lie in particular with young Ukrainians, who are being robbed of the opportunity to grow up in peace and lead the lives they wish to live.

European and international youth work seeks to bring about peace in the world. It promotes reconciliation, respectful interaction and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. All these values are being ground underfoot by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. We cannot remain credible in promoting these values towards young people if we remain silent at this time.

Germany and Ukraine are linked through a large number of European, national, regional, local and personal connections between institutions as well as civil society groups. These connections are brought to life through youth and expert exchanges between youth organisations, local authorities, churches and the entire European and international youth work community in both countries. These long-standing partnerships are now challenged to prove their sincerity and stability under exceptionally difficult circumstances, and must be put to good use to demonstrate active solidarity with and support for the people of Ukraine.

European and international youth work organisations are embracing this responsibility by leveraging all these long-standing relationships to support our partners in Ukraine. IJAB, the International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany, calls upon policy-makers at all levels to enable this support to be provided wherever it is needed, particularly in the humanitarian sphere.

We also call upon the entire European and international youth work community in Germany

- to publicise information provided by partners in Ukraine and to inform the public at large about the situation on the ground,
- to publicly reject any falsehoods spread by Russian media,
- to support humanitarian actions by Ukrainian civil society,
- to participate in public protests against the Russian aggression, and
- to launch local action alliances wherever they do not already exist.

About IJAB - International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany Partner for International Youth Work and Youth Policy in Europe and around the World

IJAB strengthens and shapes international youth work and international youth policy cooperation across Europe and around the world. We promote international exchanges and programmes with the aim of creating greater mutual understanding, offering international learning opportunities, enabling more participation, and combating xenophobia, racism and violence.

IJAB implements projects on youth policy-related issues together with its international partners and promotes the exchange of expertise within the child and youth services community, bringing together stakeholders from Germany and abroad to this end. IJAB informs and advises child and youth services providers, policymakers and administrators and offers training courses, expert exchanges, handbooks and manuals, and specialist publications. It also advises young people on going abroad and obtaining funding.

IJAB, the International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany, was established in 1967. Today, it works on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, its own member organisations and other youth work providers.

www.ijab.de/en/