

//Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)//

##Friday 25 February 2022##

- Chaired by Mr Gérard Larcher, President of the French Senate -

The meeting was opened at 9 AM.

Mr Gérard Larcher, President of the French Senate, emphasised just how quickly events have moved. The conference is being held in the shadow of an aggression, with Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, just a short distance from the European Union's external borders. He reiterated the solidarity of EU Member States' parliaments with Ukraine, its government and its people, and their unwavering attachment to the inviolability of the country's borders and the integrity of its territory. He had insisted that the Ukrainian flag should be present in the Senate chamber alongside the European and French flags in a sign of solidarity, and called upon the members of the interparliamentary conference to applaud in homage to Ukrainians' courage in the face of the oppressor.

(The members of the interparliamentary conference rose for a long standing ovation.)

Stressing that Ukraine's survival is currently at stake, the President of the Senate explained that the conference agenda had been adjusted to devote a special session to the situation in Ukraine, with a speech by that country's ambassador to France.

He hoped that a solemn statement could be adopted by consensus at the end of the special session on behalf of the defence and foreign affairs committees of the Member States' national parliaments and the European Parliament, calling for the unconditional withdrawal of

Russian troops from Ukrainian territory and a tightening of the unprecedented sanctions already placed on Russia, and offering unfailing support for Ukraine.

He stressed that it is not just the security and independence of Ukraine that is under threat, but also Europe's security. War is at Europe's door. The European Union has been built to establish and promote peace, and has been a great success, but it must also be ready to respond to attacks and confront perils of all sorts. He remarked that in Belarus, under a regime that is not recognised as legitimate by the European Union, a referendum is expected to open the way for the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Recalling that the European Union had long set aside even the thought of war, he stated that it can no longer afford to do so: given the current challenges, the theoretical debates and divisions that have sometimes arisen are no longer relevant. We must be pragmatic and choose effectiveness.

He called for military capabilities to be mobilised. Although the NATO umbrella provides the strongest guarantees of security and deterrence, these can be reinforced further by establishing European solidarity in defence. This is urgent.

He underscored that the fight against misinformation, along with cybersecurity and the control of cyberspace, are challenges for which EU countries are not prepared sufficiently or in equal measure. He recommended boosting investment in defence within the EU and establishing a preferential mechanism for investments in security, the surest way to strengthen industrial sovereignty.

He recommended a review of the European Strategic Compass project given that the parliaments were not sufficiently consulted while it was being drafted. This conference will allow parliaments to make the contributions that were lacking.

He stressed the need to raise the question of energy independence.

In his view, there is a timeless quote from Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, a work that has become required reading for contemporary geopolitics: “It is human nature everywhere to dominate those who submit and respect those who resist.” He hopes that the results of the interparliamentary conference will contribute or lead to a reinforcement of the EU's ability to resist.

He concluded by a call to rally round Ukraine and the values of freedom and democracy; democracies have always had the last word in Europe. (*Applause.*)

Ms Laetitia Saint-Paul, Vice President of the French National Assembly, considered Russia's decision to launch an armed assault on Ukraine as an act of war, agreeing with the remarks of the French President for whom it will have “profound and long-lasting consequences on our lives and the geopolitics of our continent”. Considering this aggression to be unacceptable, intolerable and extremely dangerous for peace, she joined the French President in calling for a response “without weakness, with calm, determination and unity” in unfailing solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

She recalled that the aim of Europe's founding fathers was peace, not only within its borders but also outside them, through the tireless promotion of its values of respect for fundamental rights, democracy, multilateralism, the primacy of law over force, and shared prosperity and progress between peoples.

She highlighted the extent to which Europe, dedicated to peace after learning from the ravages of war throughout its history, is facing multiple crises in politics, the economy, energy, health and the environment. These all pose a challenge for the European Union, for peace and all its values, a challenge that it has taken up.

She listed the key steps taken by the European Union in full support of Ukraine's young democracy: sending a civilian mission to assist with reforms; massive financial aid not only for the State, but also for civilian populations in the Donbas region; sanctions against Russia, etc. She also cited the Sahel, where the European Union has launched several civilian and military missions combined with development aid to help countries in the region to resist the jihadist threat. She also pointed out that the European Union has worked to guarantee protection and security on the high seas. Finally, she welcomed the efficiency and solidarity with which the European Union has addressed more global challenges, such as the coronavirus, by sharing more than 400 million doses of vaccines, or climate change, with a Green Deal that seeks to be carbon-neutral by 2050.

She refused to see the Ukrainian crisis as a demonstration of Europe's powerlessness, recalling that previous crises, far from dividing or weakening the EU, have actually helped to unite it and make it stronger. She has no doubt that the EU and its Member States will be able to stand together and work with allies to find the right responses to the aggression committed by Russia. She is profoundly convinced that the situations in Ukraine, the Sahel and elsewhere would have been much worse without the European Union's intervention.

She referred to the numerous initiatives launched in the past five years, that previously seemed impossible. The Permanent Structured Cooperation provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon was launched on 11 December 2017. The European Intervention Initiative was launched in 2018 and seeks to reinforce Member States' strategic autonomy and ability to work together. The European Defence Fund helps to finance projects to expand capabilities, and the European Peace Facility fosters joint funding of military capabilities for third

countries. All these initiatives have helped to make European defence a concrete reality, but it needs a framework and a direction. This is the purpose and goal of the Strategic Compass.

In the speaker's view, other crises will arise, perhaps even more serious ones, in new spaces such as the outer atmosphere, cyber space, the Arctic, or the ocean depths. These will involve new weapons, such as hypersonic missiles and lasers, and new players, such as private security companies.

She considers the Strategic Compass to be an essential response. Europe needs a shared threat assessment, a common definition of its strategic priorities, and better cooperation to reinforce its industrial and operational capabilities. Most importantly, all the different initiatives need to be made more coherent.

She insisted on the particular importance of Europe's rapid deployment capacity, especially in the current environment. Europe must be capable of acting quickly and autonomously wherever its strategic interests are threatened. Strategic autonomy is not a challenge for the role of NATO, nor is it a fantasy, rather it is a burning need that, if it is not fulfilled, will see current and future crises undermine the European project, perhaps even the very idea that a union of European peoples is possible.

Highlighting the essential character of the Interparliamentary Conferences on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) – in which she has sometimes taken part – in informing national parliaments, she is delighted that the present conference provides proof that the European Union is on the way to overcoming the Covid-19 crisis. She is certain that Europe will also overcome the other crises, starting with Ukraine, and hopes that the European Union will come out of this French presidency stronger. (*Applause.*)

Mr Christian Cambon, Chair of the French Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee, sees this meeting as the occasion to reassert the unity of the members of the interparliamentary conference and their attachment to the European Union's values against the backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which is weakening Europe's security overall. He hopes that the conference will send a message of shared unity and determination within and outside Europe.

The exceptional circumstances have led to profound changes to the agenda. It has been decided to dedicate a special session to the situation in Ukraine. It will be the occasion to adopt a statement by consensus expressing unity and determination in the face of the aggression suffered by this country. Such a message is essential to make sure its adversaries understand that Europe's parliaments have no illusions or false modesty as to the stakes of this conflict: we must duly note that war has returned to European soil and react with all necessary strength. Peace is never a right, even less a constant. It is up to the representatives of Europe's peoples to cultivate a spirit of defence. This implies budget choices, among other things. Defence budgets have been sacrificed for too long. We must open our eyes to the brutality of the world and draw all the necessary conclusions. After the speech by the Ukrainian ambassador, each delegation will be able to express their point of view on the current crisis.

The speaker recalled that the Ukrainian people wanted to live free. The pursuit of happiness and heritage of the Enlightenment are the very things that Mr Putin cannot bear and is seeking to break. The Ukrainian people's only crime in the Kremlin's eyes was being too free, too independent, and too sovereign.

He emphasised how proud the EU countries can be of their democratic institutions, which they must defend with a renewed determination and desire in the face of the brutality of the crime committed against the Ukrainian nation. In this combative spirit, he

called on the members of the interparliamentary conference to take part in the proceedings.

(Applause.)

Mr Jean-Louis Bourlanges, Chair of the French National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, stressed the importance of this meeting in the response of the European continent to the attack on Ukraine. He called for the groundwork to be laid for a more active and proactive Europe, one more capable of addressing the challenges it faces. In his view, what seemed to have been settled since the end of the Cold War was perhaps an illusion. President Putin has scorned the European Union's values: the rule of law, democracy and that most precious of assets, freedom. By proving that his international commitments were just useless scraps of paper, the Russian president has disqualified the word of his people and his country, and his own words, too. Vladimir Putin will not stop unless we stop him.

He called on Europeans to lead a dual revolution. First, a Copernican revolution: while Europe was built to reconcile previously warring nations, today they must come together to defend their values that are under attack from the outside. Second, a revolution of geopolitical power: it is not enough to be exemplary in terms of democracy and the rule of law. The law must be strong to be respected. In a dangerous world where China poses a serious threat to humanist values, where Islamism is dreadful, and where Russia places little store in the principles that it ought to recognise, Europeans need to shift paradigms, come together and mobilise militarily, technologically, intellectually, morally and, above all, politically. They need to have a more combative mindset if they do not want to see their values disappear.

Citing Thucydides, who said “there is no happiness without freedom, and no freedom without valour”, the speaker concluded his statement with a call to valour.

(Applause.)

Ms Patricia Mirallès, Vice-Chair of the French National Assembly's National Defence and Armed Forces Committee, drew a lesson from international events: if Europe wants to work to resolve differences through negotiations rather than war, it must endow itself with the means to make its voice heard. To do so, the European Union needs coherence and strategic autonomy. Today's world is more dangerous than before: multilateralism and security architectures have been definitively undermined, especially in Europe, and global and regional powers are now asserting themselves without restraint. The areas of conflict are also multiplying, from space to cyberspace, from the war of perception to the ocean depths.

No rhetoric over territory, no rhetoric that takes History as a hostage, should make us forget that the attack on Ukraine's sovereignty is unacceptable.

NATO plays an essential role in protecting Europe and peace. But we must not confuse Euro-Atlantic security with the European Union's security issues. 40% of EU and NATO members are not members of both. While NATO is a necessary and remarkable tool, it must be modernised and adapted, and it cannot be a substitute for the awareness that the European Union must have of its own strategic interests and security needs.

The European Union is a community with a shared destiny. To avoid being the subject of its neighbours' appetites, it must follow the path laid out by President Emmanuel Macron: Europe must shift from cooperation inside its borders to a Europe powerful on the world stage, fully sovereign, and free to make its own choices. We must refuse the artificial opposition between European defence and NATO: President Biden himself has recognised this.

Building a European defence is difficult, and the process is slow, but how could it be otherwise given the history of Europe's countries, the diversity of their diplomatic

approaches and of their military apparatuses? The circumstances encourage us to go further, faster. The Strategic Compass will be the answer.

Efforts must also be made on convergence between Member States' operational cultures, the consolidation of cooperation in the capabilities of Europe's Defence Technological and Industrial Base, and standards, The European Union's legal excellence must be leveraged to serve defence.

The speaker recalled that future generations are watching, and shared her conviction that they will estimate everything that has been done to build a powerful Europe.
(Applause.)

Mr David McAllister, Chair of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, thanked the French Senate for hosting this twentieth conference while Europe is experiencing its darkest hours since the Second World War. A country armed with nuclear weapons has attacked one of its neighbours and has promised to retaliate against any European country that comes to its aid.

The European Parliament, like all EU Member States, has condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine and considers the breach of its territorial integrity to be totally illegal and unjustifiable. This aggression represents a threat to Europe, regional stability and the world order as a whole.

Mr David McAllister considers that, beyond Ukraine, the target of this attack was democracy as a model, and this cannot leave Europeans indifferent.

He considers that Europe needs a better coordinated approach to foreign and defence policy. The European Parliament has held debates on these issues and adopted several proposals for action: promoting partnerships; improving the decision-making process;

guaranteeing our strategic autonomy, especially by reducing our dependencies; and developing coherent regional strategies around the world. For this, the European Union needs a defence policy and must adopt a Strategic Compass, as planned for spring.

Mr David McAllister concluded by considering that democracy is at the heart of all the EU's policies and that the parliamentary aspect must play its full role. *(Applause.)*

Special session on the situation in Ukraine

- Chaired by Mr Christian Cambon, Chair of the French Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee -

Mr Christian Cambon, Chair of the French Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee, called Ukraine's ambassador to France to take the floor. *(The members of the interparliamentary conference rose for a warm round of applause.)*

Mr Vadym Omelchenko, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Ukraine to France, thanked the French Parliament and the conference for inviting him to speak. It is a sign of solidarity with the heroic people of Ukraine.

Before describing the situation in Ukraine since the start of Russia's aggression, he asked the conference to observe a moment of silence in memory of the Ukrainian soldiers on Snake Island in the Black Sea, who yesterday refused to surrender and were killed by Russian troops.

(The members of the interparliamentary conference rose and observed a moment of silence.)

Mr Vadym Omelchenko then gave information about the battles taking place on the ground in his country. Ukrainian troops are resisting and defending. Soldiers and civilians

have died defending their country. The massive attack by Russia's regular army has been stopped in some places. In big cities, the people are sheltering in the underground. Terrible battles are taking place at Hostomel Airport near Kyiv; this airport is used by the Antonov aviation company for its tests, and it has a long runway that would facilitate transport of Russian troops.

In general, the Russians are advancing, but the Ukrainian army is fighting them every inch of the way. In the Donbas, the Russian army has not advanced at all. Things are more complicated near Kharkiv and Mariupol, where heavy fighting is taking place.

Mr Vadym Omelchenko recalled that this open aggression against Ukraine is indeed taking place in February 2022, not in 1941, but like during the Second World War, Kyiv is being bombarded. He confirmed that Russia is not just attacking military targets, but also residential neighbourhoods, and that it is using ballistic missiles in the skies of Europe.

He added that Russian leaders are imitating Adolf Hitler by attacking a country unilaterally under absurd pretexts: Ukraine has never threatened anyone! Russia is therefore breaching international law, and not just the United Nations Charter.

He gave an initial report of Russian losses, notably the death of 800 soldiers and the destruction of seven planes, six helicopters, 30 tanks and 130 other armoured vehicles. This shows the scale of the Russian attack.

The attack continues today, Friday 25 February, in much of Ukraine, including in the west near Odesa and on the Moldovan border, but the Ukrainian defence system is holding up. Belarus and Transnistria are both serving as bases for the attack, especially missile launches. The life of 44 million Ukrainians is under threat, even though Ukrainian society is peaceful and democratic.

He considers that the objective of Russia, a nuclear power, is not just to destroy the Ukrainian State, but also to create its own world in which Europe either does not exist or is deeply divided. In the Russian leaders' warped vision, in their imagination, their "defenceless" country is being threatened by Ukraine and Alexei Navalny poisoned himself, but neither Ukraine nor NATO has threatened anyone. Therefore, it is a threat to the entire world, as clearly shown by Putin's speech where he spoke only of war, and the response to this universal threat must be universal itself.

He added that war is also taking hybrid forms and asks Europeans to trust Ukrainian media, because unlike many Russian propaganda media outlets, they do not distort reality or serve up barefaced lies!

Ukraine asks all European countries and the international community to take all measures to put an end to this aggression. It is not asking for troops to be sent and is aware that it is alone in facing one of the world's biggest armies, but it does have needs, for example in fuel for military vehicles and in blood.

For Mr Vadym Omelchenko, Russia has a strategic advantage, because human life does not count for its leaders! In Ukraine, the dead are received on bended knee and with great emotion – each life counts! – whereas in Russia, society is silent, and thousands of people can die without worrying the country's leaders.

Mr Vadym Omelchenko called on the West to support Ukraine resolutely and condemn Russia's criminal acts that constitute acts of terrorism, from a strictly legal standpoint. Ukraine has several requests: impose an economic blockade on Russia; end Europe's energy dependence on Russia; block Russian media and television stations that influence citizens and seek to turn them into zombies; immediately freeze all the bank

accounts and assets of Russian oligarchs and those close to power; expel Russian ambassadors; and give Ukraine the resources to defend itself.

He concluded by reiterating that Ukraine is aware that it is fighting on behalf of the whole world. (*The members of the interparliamentary conference rose for a long standing ovation.*)

Mr Christian Cambon, Chairman, thanked the ambassador for his testimony and the information given to the conference. He offered the absolute support of all delegations to Ukraine in its ordeal and in the face of the historic breach of international law of which it and its people are the victims.

He informed the conference that the troika and the European Parliament delegation have prepared a draft joint statement, which the members of the conference will now be able to debate and which should be adopted by consensus.

Mr Pavel Fischer, representative of the Czech Senate, thanked the chair of the conference for altering the day's agenda to hold a debate on this most serious of issues: Russia's war against Ukraine.

Russia is the aggressor. Here it is positioning itself, including in terms of controlling information, as it has done in the past. Mr Pavel Fischer recalled the example of Belarus where, when journalists tried to speak out against the regime, they were replaced by Russians. He considers that many other countries could be concerned, for example Moldova.

Mr Pavel Fischer feels that the sanctions imposed at the time of the invasion are necessarily arriving too late, and that we must act quickly and with firm determination.

Finally, he made two appeals. First, we must not forget that the peoples of non-EU member countries are attached to the perspective of Europe – now is not the time for equivocations. Second, the Strategic Compass will be adopted in a few weeks and must be readjusted to take account of the threat posed by Russia to our freedoms. *(Applause.)*

Ms Nathalie Loiseau, representative of the European Parliament, first pointed out that Ukraine is in Europe: this is indeed a war in Europe! Furthermore, Ukraine is under attack because it has turned towards Europe, not for what it is, and because it is like us. It is also democracy that is therefore under attack.

She considers that Europe has a responsibility and cannot look away. Generally, we need to stop talking about “frozen” conflicts. We have simply forgotten about them, and have not taken sufficient action to end them.

She added that, ultimately, no one wanted to believe that Putin would start a war, but he saw that America was tired, especially after the withdrawal from Afghanistan, and also the hesitations of some in Europe as to building a robust European defence. The German chancellor and French president were right in trying to dissuade Putin from starting a war. In any case, this war is the choice of one man, and he must be held fully accountable.

She believes that the European Union must impose massive sanctions, and that we must not think about how much they will cost our economies. We do not have the right to fail. It is a historic moment, and other conflicts could erupt, in the Balkans for example, if Europe is not careful.

She concluded by expressing her full solidarity with Ukraine and stating that the European Union must also speak the language of power if it wants to be respected. *(Applause.)*

M. Joël Guerriau, representative of the French Senate, asked how best to defend democracy in Ukraine and the country's legitimate authorities, especially its president, Volodymyr Zelensky. Europe and the West were not prepared and thought that war was impossible. These illusions have been swept away! (*Applause.*)

Ms Ana María Botella Gómez, representative of the Spanish Congress of Deputies, recalled that, before the aggression chosen by the Russian president, many people thought the threat was only hybrid. In the end, missiles have been launched, tanks and planes are advancing in Ukraine, and the population is impacted directly. Nothing can justify that!

She then asked why the international architecture built with such effort after the Second World War could not avoid this nightmare. This unilateral war is a problem for all Europeans, who will pay a heavy price, and for the entire world. We must show Putin that breaches of international rights and the sovereignty of another country cannot go unpunished.

She asked Europe to show the greatest unity in defending international law and to step up sanctions. The priority is to protect the people of Ukraine.

She considers that civil society needs to be correctly informed, especially about our values and alliances, and to prepare it for such crises. After quoting Diderot, she concluded by stating that Europe must not abandon Ukraine. (*Applause.*)

Ms Monika Gregorčič, representative of the Slovenian National Assembly, considers the images of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine to be very worrying. So many people have already lost their lives! We absolutely must support Ukraine.

She firmly condemned this aggression, which constitutes a breach of international law, and considers that we must impose the heaviest sanctions on Russia, especially targeting

strategic sectors. The international community cannot accept any change, whether territorial or political, that is made by use of force.

She added that this crisis will have repercussions on security in Europe, especially in the western Balkans where Russia has been trying to increase its influence for several years. This is why Europe must be strong and unified.

She concluded by calling for Russia's political isolation and for the European Union to reinforce its defence capabilities, in relation with NATO. Diplomatic channels must remain open, but we are far from a de-escalation. (*Applause.*)

Ms Roberta Pinotti, representative of the Italian Senate, expressed her agreement with the draft joint statement. She feels an immense shock, especially after the poignant remarks by Ukraine's ambassador to France.

She recalled that the signals had been worrying for several months, but that no one expected such a war to break out on European soil. This is a flagrant breach of international law, and we must support Ukraine's independence and sovereignty.

She called on Russia to withdraw its troops immediately, and for a firm, united and determined response and heavy sanctions from the West. NATO is considering deploying additional troops to its eastern borders but, she added, a more coherent European defence would be an advantage in such a crisis, as well as reinforcing NATO.

She concluded by saying that Italy, in coordination with its allies, will do all that is necessary to resolve this unprecedentedly serious crisis. (*Applause.*)

Mr Bogdan Klich, representative of the Polish Senate, welcomed the draft statement. He thanked the French Presidency for incorporating a certain number of ideas that Poland had suggested with support from the Czech delegation.

He recalled that, since the early 1990s, Poland has been looking for a new, cooperative security model. We could see promising signs that it was taking root in the region, but unfortunately Vladimir Putin has made it obsolete by attacking Ukraine. Dialogue has been replaced by the use of force.

In light of this new cold war, he feels that we must use all means possible to support Ukraine, especially by providing weapons and imposing a robust set of sanctions against the Russian Federation. He added that the sanctions decided in 2014 were too weak. *(Applause.)*

He stated that these trade sanctions and economic sanctions must be political and financial, and that we must exclude Russia from the Swift bank payments system.

He expects that Ukraine will need a veritable Marshall Plan after the war. He noted that our Ukrainian brothers and sisters have been fighting since 2014 for their country to join the European Union and that we must build European and Atlantic unity while reinforcing Europe. Finally, he stressed that the Americans must be by our side. *(Applause.)*

Mr Pål Jonson, representative of the Swedish Riksdag, said that Europe must offer up a robust, united response in these dark times, and must do everything it can to relieve human suffering and support the security forces in Ukraine.

First, he noted that Russia does not accept the foundations of European security. He added that, for small countries like his, it is essential that the door to Europe and European security remains open.

He then welcomed the strong leadership shown by the United States in bringing the West together, and called for more Europe in order to put up a strong response.

Finally, he considers that no one should be surprised by the invasion of Ukraine. Was our response strong enough after the invasion of Georgia? What did Europe do after the Salisbury attack? Russia is constantly edging forward. President Putin has now crossed the Rubicon, and a strong, united response is needed to stop him. (*Applause.*)

Mr Martin Lidegaard, representative of the Danish *Folketing*, thanked the French Senate for organising this interparliamentary conference.

He said that the Danish parliament agreed last night to send additional contributions to NATO, especially police forces and planes to Poland and the Baltic countries, as well as equipment for Ukraine's armed forces. He said that Denmark urges all countries to follow its lead if they can.

He fully supports the draft joint statement. He added that the European Union must work towards its energy independence, because ultimately it is Russia's gas exports to Europe that supply Mr Putin's war industry, and EU countries are the biggest importers of Russian gas and petrol.

He is grateful to Germany for ending the Nord Stream 2 project. We cannot stop Nord Stream 1 in a day, but perhaps the European Union could establish a roadmap to expand renewable energies and forego Russian gas. It would strike to the heart of Vladimir Putin's regime, he concludes. (*Applause.*)

Mr Titus Corlăţean, representative of the Romanian Senate, also thanked the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union and, on behalf of the Romanian delegation, supported adopting the proposed statement.

He offered his support to the Republic of Moldova and to Georgia. He feels that, if we do not respond, the next victim will be Transnistria.

He asserted that, since the illegal annexation of Crimea, Romania has supported Ukraine's territorial integrity and independence, despite the poor treatment of the Romanian minority in Ukraine. He reiterated this support and added that the invasion of Ukraine is a crime that requires the intervention of an international court.

He recalled that dramatic events have taken place in the Black Sea since yesterday. Russian forces have taken Snake Island, which is just forty-four kilometres from the Romanian coast and a strategically important port. Russia is already at NATO's borders, he concluded.

Against Vladimir Putin, who is threatening Europe with “unprecedented” consequences, he insisted that we must think about how to take action together to defend European values. (*Applause.*)

Mr Radoslaw Fogiel, representative of the Polish Sejm, expressed his solidarity with the courageous Ukrainian nation, whose soldiers are fighting relentlessly to save their country.

While Russia's aggression against Ukraine is of course a barbaric act, he considers it to be the result of several years of gullibility from the European Union.

He feels that Europeans did not take the necessary steps to discourage Vladimir Putin in the past, and did not hear the successive warning bells. In Tbilisi in 2008, the Georgian president had warned that it would soon be the turn of Ukraine, then the Baltic countries and Poland.

He added that the European Union simply said that we needed to understand Russia's point of view and that Vladimir Putin was a partner with whom we could negotiate and sign contracts, such as the Nord Stream project. In his view, it was a way to keep European business happy.

He hopes that the European Union will draw a line under the past, because it must isolate Russia and become totally independent of the energy it sells, such as its gas. He recognised that it is a very ambitious project, but that is the price of freedom, democracy and the defence of European values, a price that is never too high. (*Applause.*)

Mr Rainer Semet, representative of the German *Bundestag*, noted that our world has changed since the invasion of Ukraine. Few thought Putin capable of going so far, and yet Europe is now at war again.

He recalled that Putin is simply fighting against democracy and freedom, the values that Europe has long fought for and that it believed were no longer under threat on its soil.

He noted that, when it comes to Russia, the world is increasingly polarised, and we must do everything to defend our values. We must especially rethink our economic relationships, defence strategy, and partnerships with friendly countries. For now, he concludes, we must support Ukraine and put pressure on Russia. (*Applause.*)

Mr Chris Stoffer, representative of the Dutch House of Representatives, insisted that Europe must respond firmly to the invasion of Ukraine: it cannot go unpunished. He added that his country supports the Ukrainian people and the prepared draft statement.

He recalled that, during a NATO summit in 2014, political leaders committed to investing 2% of their national GDP in defence. In his view, it is high time to keep this promise, the first step towards our strategic autonomy, since evidently the spirit of solidarity and friendship that has prevailed since the end of the Second World War is no longer enough. He pointed out that the Netherlands has already increased its defence spending, adding that time is of the essence.

In conclusion, he offered a quote attributed to Ralph Abernathy, who fought for civil rights alongside Martin Luther King: “we don't know what the future holds, but we do know who will decide our future”. (*Applause.*)

Ms Ventsislava Lyubenova, representative of the Bulgarian National Assembly, remarked that recent days and nights have shown us the darkest side of human ambition. She considers that this aggression against peace, freedom and the rule of law cannot go unanswered and that all friendly countries to Ukraine must take appropriate measures.

She pointed out that the European Union must remain united, continue to demand peace, and leave diplomatic channels open. Like all the other countries represented here, Bulgaria will look at how it can participate in humanitarian operations and reach out to the Ukrainian people and Bulgarians living in Ukraine.

Bulgaria calls on Russia to cease military operations immediately and withdraw from Ukraine in order to return to the principles of international law. (*Applause.*)

Mr Giorgos Karoullas, representative of the Cypriot House of Representatives, noted that we are at a turning point in our history. Our principles and values are threatened by the breach of a sovereign country's integrity, which recalls the darkest hours of the Cold War. He added that it is the stability of the whole of Europe that is threatened.

Yesterday, the Cypriot parliament adopted a resolution condemning the aggression and calling for a ceasefire and immediate withdrawal of Russian troops. He said that Cyprus supports Ukraine's territorial integrity. He insisted that as a matter of principle, any breach of international law must be condemned, whatever it might be.

He said that, for forty-seven years, Turkey has occupied 40% of his country's territory and is pursuing a process of 'Turkification' that Cyprus also condemns.

He declared that only European cohesion and true determination will allow us to take the measures that are needed, because the European Union must remain united and stand together to reinforce the structures of security and defend international stability. (*Applause.*)

Mr Marko Mihkelson, representative of the Estonian Riigikogu, also thanked the French Senate for organising this meeting. He is glad to see such solidarity with Ukraine, before adding that we must now put our words into action.

He stressed the fact that the battles in Ukraine threaten our shared future and that we must take action before others fall victim to Russia – be it Estonia or the whole of Europe. The crimes taking place in Ukraine must not go unpunished.

To the 70% of Ukrainians who want to see their country join the European Union, he assured them that Ukraine is welcome if it meets the criteria that have been set. (*Applause.*)

In conclusion, he said that the EU's national parliaments must do everything in their power to send humanitarian aid to Ukraine promptly. (*Applause.*)

Mr Emanuelis Zingeris, representative of the Lithuanian Seimas, expressed his support for Ukraine and called on all his colleagues to condemn this act of aggression firmly. He added that we must make sure that Ukraine's entry into the European Union is assured, and must resist the Russian dictatorship and inflict sanctions on it.

He noted that all the political parties in his country have expressed their solidarity with the Ukrainian people, as well as with the democratic and sovereign government of Ukraine. (*Applause.*) These events remind us of the Second World War, and he thinks of all the victims of this conflict, starting with the Jewish people.

He insisted that we must send Ukraine all that it needs, especially military equipment, and take all necessary economic and financial measures. Finally, he asked the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to exclude Russia from the Council of Europe (*Applause.*)

Mr Sergio Sousa Pinto, representative of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, offered Ukraine the full support of the Portuguese delegation. He stressed the need to end exports of Russian petrol and gas while imposing strong and immediate sanctions.

He said that Europe must prepare itself to a return to policies of deterrence. (*Applause.*)

Mr Rihards Kols, representative of the Latvian Parliament, offered his support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, while insisting on the need to inflict sanctions on Russia. Each parliament and country in the EU must take similar measures. It is vital to show clearly which side you are on.

He pointed out that Belarus supports the Russian invasion. After a referendum in two days' time, this country will probably be considered Russian military territory, and we must also impose sanctions on it with the same determination.

He insisted on the fact that Russia is an autocracy harbouring its own illusions, and that the invasion of Ukraine puts the whole of Europe in danger. Is it not also time, in his view, to talk about climate change?

He called on all his colleagues to open their eyes. At a time when Russia is attacking our democratic values, freedom of expression must be used wisely to counter Russian propaganda. (*Applause.*)

For **Mr Gerard Craughwell, representative of the Senate of Ireland**, this conference is like a family meeting where all of the members are worried about one of their member, Ukraine. He said that Ireland stands with Ukraine, supports the implementation of massive sanctions against Russia, and intends to help all Ukrainians who wish to flee their country.

He added that the aggressors will be held accountable for their actions. The European Union seeks peace, not a bloodbath. We must cut off the funds of Putin and his inner circle, reduce our dependence on Russian energy, strike the invader's banking and financial system, and be united in imposing strong sanctions.

He recalled that nobody took action to defend Chechnya, Georgia or Crimea in 2014. He stressed that words are not enough; it is now necessary to act together, and in a very firm fashion. Even though Ireland is not a member of NATO, he urges it to intervene to prevent Russian aircraft from bombing innocent people. (*Applause*)

Mr Ahmet Aydin, representative of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, stressed the importance of this conference to security in Europe.

First of all, he strongly disputed the remarks made by the representative of the Greek part of Cyprus, who spoke of an invasion by Turkey: the only invasion, in his view, is the occupation of all administrative and government functions by solely the Greek part.

He then assured that Turkey supports the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Russian position is unacceptable and does not comply with any international text. It poses a major threat to the security of the region and the world.

He said that Turkey is in full agreement with its allies and that this crisis proves that his country is a crucial member of NATO. He stated that Europe's security policy must be consistent with NATO action, and must complement, rather than duplicate it.

Stressing that closing borders is not the way to prevent crises, he said it is instead important to come together and develop cooperation, since Europe's security starts beyond its borders. He hoped that France, which holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union, will take all necessary measures to ensure that the political problems facing Turkey can be resolved, and to conclude new defence agreements.

He added that his country fully supports the draft statement that has been circulated. He concluded by thanking the conference for welcoming Turkey as a candidate country for EU membership.

Mr Bjarni Jonsson, representative of the Parliament of Iceland, expressed his sadness about the developments over the last few days. He said that Iceland condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine, an act of aggression from another era, which violates international law, with devastating consequences.

He said that the primary concern must be to avoid civilian casualties. Children deserve a future. That is why Iceland calls for Russia to withdraw its troops immediately. During a debate at the Icelandic Parliament, all political parties expressed their support for the Ukrainian people.

He considers that this crisis should prompt Europeans to strengthen their security systems and make greater efforts to equip themselves to respond to this kind of challenge together. He said that the immediate task is to offer Ukraine meaningful, practical help.

He thanked France for displaying the Ukrainian flag alongside the French and European flags, as a token of solidarity. In conclusion, he hopes that all of the governments will commit to taking forceful action to support Ukraine. *(Applause)*

Mr Miodrag Lekić, representative of the Parliament of Montenegro, reminded the meeting that the Western Balkan countries wish to join the European Union, while of course complying with the established criteria.

He said that the government of Montenegro condemns Russia's military attack and that it is time for action, not rhetoric. He proposed drawing on Auguste Comte's dictum for inspiration, "Know in order to predict, in order to act". We must begin by knowing, in order to understand the complexity of the situation. He considers that a diplomatic solution can still be reached, and commended the efforts of the President of the French Republic to this end.

He concluded by saying that for Europe, investing in the security and prosperity of the Western Balkans also means investing in its own security and prosperity. *(Applause)*

Mr Christian Tybring-Gjedde, representative of the Parliament of Norway, declared that Norway supports the proposed draft statement and the implementation of stronger sanctions against Russia.

He explained that future crises will combine direct and indirect action, military and non-military intervention. There will be more crises; many will not reach the threshold of military intervention, but we must also prepare for massive military confrontations. With advances in technology, conflicts will often be of a hybrid nature: Europeans must therefore cooperate to develop their technologies and increase their defence spending, both within and outside NATO.

He commended the Ukrainian resistance, which has risen up to defend our Western values and way of life. He added that many Westerners would probably like to go fight in Ukraine, but Putin is likely to exploit such urges for propaganda purposes, by explaining that Russia is protecting Ukraine from this foreign intervention.

He concluded by quoting Benjamin Franklin, “We must hang together, or we shall all hang separately.” It is important to take collective action. *(Applause)*

Mr Christian Cambon, Chair, concluded the session by noting the consensus on adopting the draft solemn statement, which represents a message of support for Ukrainians. He said that he hopes that Mr Putin will understand that the Parliaments of European countries are united and determined to oppose his policy, which flouts international law and relies on methods from another era aimed at countering the desire for democracy and freedom among its neighbours. *(Applause)*

The Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy adopted the draft joint statement on the situation in Ukraine.

- Chaired by Mr Jean-Louis Bourlanges, Chair of the French National Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee-

First session – “The European Union’s response to the crisis in Ukraine”

Mr Jean-Louis Bourlanges, Chair of the French National Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee, opened the first session devoted to the following question: “What should be the European Union’s response to the crisis in Ukraine?”

Mr Éric Autellet, French Air Force General, Major General of the French Defence Staff, noted that the Russian military aggression against Ukraine represents one of the most serious violations of the European security order in decades. This aggression, which has been strongly condemned by all political leaders, including President Macron, flouts international law and undermines the foundations of the values upheld by the European Union. To achieve their aims, Russia has used intimidation techniques, followed by military action, placing all of the countries before a fait accompli.

He explained that while the peace-crisis-war continuum has prevailed since the end of the Cold War, we are now faced with hybrid strategies played out in the intervals, which use duality to sow confusion or make it difficult to ascribe acts, and this can lead to confrontation.

He said that a new triptych of conflict has appeared: competition, disputes and confrontation. According to General Autellet, competition seems to have become the normal state of international relations, in an environment marked by the disinhibition of some States

regarding the rules of our security architecture, who readily use intimidation techniques and *fait accompli* strategies to achieve their aims. This heightened competition can evolve into a dispute, whether open or implied, in the areas of cyberspace and the information sphere. Confrontation, as seen in Ukraine, is the final phase, without excluding the previous states.

As such, he believes it is necessary, and even vital, to show our solidarity, cohesion and determination. He said that at the military level, we must intensify our cooperation and develop interoperability between our forces. In this respect, the EU Strategic Compass sets a common framework and identifies thematic objectives and timelines. In keeping with this framework, the Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces proposed that we must be pragmatic in our approach to operations: we must favour commitment frameworks that give European States some leeway while being compatible with the timing of their decision-making processes; he called for *ad hoc* structures and structural cooperation between partner countries in order to gain in responsiveness and agility.

General Autellet added that we must consider contemporary threats with realism and rethink our methods for managing crises. Crises have evolved, and we must take into account this intensification, by equipping ourselves with robust capabilities; this must be one of our medium-term concerns. We must also take into account the new areas of conflict: space, cyberspace, information, etc. Lastly, the development of shared military expertise will contribute to a political response to these new challenges.

He concluded by stressing that the events in Ukraine mark a turning point in the history of Europe and will have consequences for the geopolitics of our continent. We must pursue our common efforts, by maintaining the coherence of our works: he considers that the continuity between the past and future presidencies is proof of this solidarity. At the military level, this coherence is expressed by the complementarity between the European Union and

NATO, the foundation of our collective defence. We must also consider the operational ambition of the European Union, which is the political expression of its strategic solidarity, and think about new tools to respond to new conflict issues. (*Applause*)

Ms Alice Guitton, Head of Strategy and International Relations, French Ministry for the Armed Forces, speaking by video conference, stressed that this interparliamentary conference plays an essential role in Europeans' taking ownership of the major security challenges facing the continent.

The invasion of Ukraine is a watershed moment. After lying and pretending to engage in diplomacy, Mr Putin deliberately chose war, in violation of the United Nations Charter and the founding principles of European and international order, despite the intense diplomatic efforts made by France, European countries and the United States to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. She stated that France strongly condemns this act for which there was not any provocation, based on justifications that are devoid of any reality, and tied to a world view that we do not share.

She said that France stands in full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainians. Their freedom is ours too. France is continuing its efforts, including diplomatic efforts, in all bodies, within the European Union, NATO, the UN etc. to put a stop to this war. France will continue to provide Ukraine with economic, financial and humanitarian aid, as well as military equipment.

It is vital for Europeans to continue to show unity and cohesion. France has continually consulted its partners over the previous weeks and will continue to do so despite attempts to divide Europeans. More than ever, the allies must be united and firm towards Russia.

Ms Guitton said she believes that the press conference held yesterday by the Secretary General of NATO, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council, sent a very strong signal of this unity. She pointed out that the European Union has reacted in a united, firm and rapid manner. An initial package of sanctions was adopted Tuesday and came into effect on Wednesday evening. On Thursday morning, the 27 Member States expressed their unequivocal condemnation of the aggression. The European Council dealt a heavy blow to Moscow: the sanctions targeted certain individuals, the financial, energy and transport sectors, Russian exports, and the issuance of visas. These sanctions are of a unprecedented scale. The European Union will also provide Ukraine with unprecedented aid of €1.2 billion.

She also pointed out that NATO is a defensive alliance and has continued to offer Russia the possibility of a rigorous dialogue. Although no attack has been observed against any of the allied countries, NATO nevertheless stands ready for any eventuality: consultations have been held on the basis of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty and it has been decided to activate graduated response plans. A virtual NATO summit will be held this afternoon to monitor developments in the situation.

She said that France will strengthen its contribution to NATO's forward presence in Estonia, accelerate the deployment of troops in Romania, and that it is ready to deploy the rapid response force, of which it commands the air and land components.

Lastly, she said that France will hold Russia accountable within the UN: this is not just a European crisis, the stability of the international order is at stake.

The Russian invasion should lead Europeans to realise that the world has changed and become more violent. This crisis highlights the need for a European strategic awakening,

which was already one of the objectives of the French presidency of the European Union. Member States must renew their commitment to equip themselves with strong operational ambition, for which the Strategic Compass could be a tool, to reduce our dependence and increase our resilience... *(The connection was interrupted due to technical reasons.)*

Mr Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Board of the Robert Schuman Foundation, noted that Ukraine's solitude, which everyone regrets, must not obscure the fact that in the world to come, the European Union will also be alone. When Europeans must chart Europe's future, they will do so alone. Of course, we have allies, but they are far away, and it is not up to them to decide for us.

He explained that strategic autonomy means the possibility of deciding and acting independently. This notion, which France has greatly insisted upon, is overarching; it relates to our resilience, our resistance, as well as our ability to decide for ourselves. He stressed that it is up to Europeans to decide their future and their security by themselves, to determine their posture with regard to the Russian dictatorship, to decide what they want in terms of technological, economic, political independence etc.

He pointed out that the concept of strategic autonomy, which is sometimes misunderstood, does not mean that we must abandon all alliances: we have allies, but the best allies are always the closest ones, and not those who are far away. Strategic autonomy must be a priority for Europe. In order to achieve this, we must discuss among ourselves and show solidarity, by looking to the future and being aware that we alone will decide our future. *(Applause)*

For **Mr Nik Prebil, representative of the National Assembly of Slovenia**, the European Union's response to the terrifying invasion of Ukraine must be firm and swift, so

that the Russian dictator feels the effect of the sanctions and his people push him to stop this attack. The European Union and the Member States must give their full support to Ukraine.

As a young MP who is 30 years old, Mr Prebil said that he is shocked by this cruel and mad intervention, aimed solely at defending personal interests by causing a bloodbath, and threatening everything Europeans stand for.

Mr Bojan Kekec, representative of the National Council of Slovenia, explained that his country understands Ukraine's situation. Thirty years ago, Slovenia was in a similar position, as it was threatened by Russian aggression. He therefore expressed his compassion for the Ukrainians. Agreements to protect against nuclear threats are essential, since the proposed package of sanctions is not enough. He reiterated that we cannot put a price on liberty and freedom. Europe as a whole, and especially the Eastern countries, must take action. If the EU does not expand the area of democracy, others will occupy this space. As such, Slovenia supports this statement.

Mr Michael Gahler, representative of the European Parliament, considers that a united response, as comprehensive as possible, is needed in light of the Russian dictator's desire for destruction. We must first of all welcome refugees and exclude Russia from the Swift system. Europeans will not be cold this winter, since they have sufficient gas and oil resources. He therefore called on the German federal government to change their position.

Mr Reinhold Lopatka, representative of the National Council of Austria, said that he agrees with what Mr Gahler said. He recalled the requirement for neutrality at the military level, but not at the political level, in response to the undermining of Ukraine's territorial integrity. European assets must be protected, even if the Austrian constitution sets

out this neutrality requirement. However, in Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimea, the Ukrainian people were not listened to. We must therefore oblige Russia to listen to this voice: all Europeans must stand together and impose sanctions. Mr Lopatka thanked all of the parliamentarians for the strong message sent today. (*Applause*)

Mr Juozas Olekas, representative of the European Parliament, pointed out that the man formerly called “Mr President” is, as of this morning, called “Mr Criminal”, and said we must help those who defend European values in Ukraine, who are asking for simple measures: sanctions, exclusion from the Swift system and military support. Mr Olekas asked everyone to be strong and united, and to take immediate action, since they owe that to the Ukrainians. He called on everyone in his national parliament to remember that they must take a very firm stand, and asked to triple the sum allocated to help Ukraine, since the current amount of €1.2 billion is not enough. (*Applause*)

Ms Alexandra Attalides, representative of the House of Representatives of Cyprus, stressed that the unimaginable has come to pass: war in Europe. For ten years, Europe watched Putin become increasingly aggressive, and he has been able to fund this war machine through European energy bills. We should have condemned his brutal methods instead of focusing on appeasement. She called for a very firm stand against Putin and those who violate international law. Zero tolerance must be shown. Europe must now work for its autonomy in terms of security. Ms Attalides reminded the parliamentarians that Cyprus has been illegally occupied for forty-seven years, and that it stood firmly with Ukraine.

Ms Nathalie Loiseau, representative of the European Parliament, asserted that Europeans will not wage war in Russia, since they do not like war and are not prepared. However, we must be prepared to defend democracy, and above all, move on from this endless debate about whether we need more NATO or more European defence, since both are

needed. Ms Loiseau insisted on the fact that if Ukraine had been in NATO, it would not have been attacked. Strengthening NATO as a way to defend Europe is therefore crucial. If we do not understand that, it will be a historic failure and we will be failing future generations.

Mr Kim Valentin, representative of the Danish *Folketing*, compared Mr Putin to a child bullying his classmates. He deplored the fact that he is using the world as his playground. In his view, it is essential for Europeans not to show weakness if they want to win the battle. A bully laughs when others show compassion, it is just a game for him. Putin is watching as Europe debates and will not change overnight, which means that strong financial sanctions must be imposed to deal a heavy blow to Russian banks and oligarchs' assets, and halt direct investment in Russia. Russia is a weak economy, it will not be able to fund a long war. Mr Valentin concluded with a call for unity among Europeans. (*Applause*)

Mr Iñigo Barandiaran, representative of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, expressed the solidarity of the Basque people for the Ukrainians; the affront on them is an affront on all democracies. He agreed with Chair Bourlanges, who called for a strong and united response, emphasising that strength comes from unity. Mr Barandiaran insisted on the fact that although the Ukrainians have said that they are alone, they can count on support from all of the European parliaments and people to provide them with necessary resources, in the humanitarian field, among others, to help them survive this war. (*Applause*)

Mr Reinhard Hans Bütikofer, representative of the European Parliament, said that he shares the sympathy and solidarity expressed by his colleagues. However, he also asked everyone to be self-critical. He asked how Europeans got to where they were. Were they naive? Perhaps they did not want to realise the developments orchestrated by a revisionist dictator. Were they arrogant? Lastly, he asked whether warnings from those from

Eastern Europe have not been ignored. He therefore asked everyone to truly change their perceptions. (*Applause*)

- Chaired by Ms Patricia Mirallès, Vice-Chair of the French National Assembly
National Defence and Armed Forces Committee -

Mr Konstantinos Gioulekas, representative of the Parliament of Greece, stressed that the people of his country experienced a similar situation to the one happening in Ukraine today. The international community and Europe are called to accept their responsibilities, since much is at stake in terms of geopolitics – compliance with treaties and the right to live freely – and energy issues. He insisted on the fact that, above all, Greece respects the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all Member States. As in Cyprus, which is illegally occupied by Turkey, the situation is traumatic. He therefore called on all NATO partners to respond appropriately to the aggression, and on Europe to develop an autonomous strategy and show that it capable of responding to these attacks and this challenging of international treaties and borders.

Mr Marko Mihkelson, representative of the Estonian *Riigikogu*, said that the time for words is over: it is time to act. Estonia decided to send additional ammunition and kits for fighters. He expressed the hope that Germany and Finland will reach an agreement and help Estonia send weapons. Lastly, he urged everyone to consider how to block Russian propaganda channels in Europe and protect freedom of expression more effectively. (*Applause*)

Mr Piero Fassino, representative of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, wholeheartedly condemned the events in Ukraine. This unacceptable aggression is an attempt to return to the theory of limited sovereignties, reflected in Russia's desire to regain control of

certain regions in Europe and go back to the Cold War. He asked Europeans to categorically refuse this strategy. The European Union must guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and must include this country within European policies as quickly as possible, since it must be aware that it belongs to a family of democracies.

Mr Fassino added that more severe sanctions are needed: we need a common European strategy to diversify energy resources so as to reduce Russian energy supplies and impose more severe sanctions. He concluded by recalling that this conflict has created a massive flow of refugees, who will have to be received by all Member States, in a show of solidarity. *(Applause)*

Mr Maximilian Krah, representative of the European Parliament, proposed some aspects to think about to develop a useful response, since sanctions must be effective and not counter-productive. He said that an evaluation seems to be needed before acting too quickly. We must avoid pushing Russia into China's arms. Mr Krah quoted Talleyrand, who said that we should not follow our first impulses: they may be noble, but they are not necessarily wise.

Mr Andrius Mazuronis, representative of the Seimas of Lithuania, recalled Mr Zelensky's statement that Ukraine has been left alone to fight this mad, fascist aggression by the criminal regime of Russia. Military, economic and humanitarian aid is needed, along with absolutely massive sanctions, but these sanctions have not come, despite promises. He added that the Russian Federation must be isolated and excluded from all international parliamentary activity. He regretted that this exclusion did not come earlier, after the events in Chechnya, Georgia and Crimea. He concluded by asserting that tomorrow will be too late. *(Applause)*

Ms Assita Kanko, representative of the European Parliament, reiterated how shocking these events are, and the extent to which living in peace, without war, in a democracy marked by the spirit of the Enlightenment, is taken for granted. She insisted on the fact that, in reality, we must protect our freedom every day.

Ms Kanko regretted that Europeans had the wool pulled over their eyes, due to their energy dependence. She therefore praised Mr Macron's initiative to strengthen European energy independence. She added that we must also be vigilant against radical Islam, which goes against the European idea of freedom. It is essential to defend European values, especially when nearby countries are at stake. (*Applause*)

Mr Bastiaan van Apeldoorn, representative of the Netherlands Upper Chamber, considered that this brutal attack on Ukraine by Russia violates the fundamental principles of international law, the prohibition of aggression. He described a Russian president who launched a war from the safety of his Kremlin palace, while civilians were being massacred. Europe must therefore respond strongly and Moscow must realize the price to pay. He pointed out that many Russians do not want this war and that the diplomatic path must be taken, at all costs. He said that he hopes that Russian troops will be withdrawn and that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine will be restored. He concluded by asking how we can get back to a diplomatic path to find a solution to the conflict.

Mr Kacper Płażyński, representative of the Polish Sejm, said that Russian markets have already fallen by 20% following the announcement of sanctions. He regretted that certain countries, including Germany, are refusing the exclusion from the Swift system. He considered that the German energy sector is partially responsible for the current situation, and that it has blocked these sanctions. He pointed out that Swift sanctions were imposed on Iran in 2012, although Iran was not waging war, whereas today, Putin is committing war

crimes, defying Europeans and threatening nuclear attacks. He asked for everyone to be very attentive to Mr Zelensky's personal situation and concluded by condemning Germany's position, which he described as shameful.

Ms Zeljana Zovko, representative of the European Parliament, said that, like all Croats, she feels the violence of this conflict in her flesh. She herself has been a refugee and lost loved ones. She restated her solidarity with the Ukrainian people and all the families who are suffering. She called for everyone to remain united and not abandon the Ukrainians, by stressing the importance of resuming diplomatic channels as soon as possible. *(Applause)*

Mr Pavel Fischer, representative of the Senate of the Czech Republic, said that Russian secret services are very active in Europe. He informed the meeting that dozens of Russian agents have been expelled from his country by the Czech government and that large stocks of ammunition have been discovered, demonstrating the growing influence of Russia in the very heart of Europe, in business, media groups, and among public figures. He therefore urged all parliamentarians to be very vigilant about Russian acts of espionage and spies, and to act accordingly. *(Applause)*

Mr Titus Corlăţean, representative of the Senate of Romania, considered that Europeans are paying the price for their position, which has been too diluted and not united enough since 2014; he described discussions about imposing sanctions against Russia at the time as a joke. The reaction was not strong enough after the military events in Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. He therefore called on Europe and its NATO allies to have a clear, united, coherent voice, and on Europe to offer a real European prospect for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, while stressing that special attention must be paid to the Balkans, since they may suffer serious repercussions from this conflict.

Mr Costas Mavrides, representative of the European Parliament, supported the unanimous condemnation of the aggression against Ukraine and asked for rapid and strong sanctions against the Kremlin and Mr Putin himself. This is a flagrant violation of international law and one more attack on democratic values. Mr Mavrides recalled the terms of the statement, which calls for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries, and was angered to see that Mr Erdoğan is a signatory, on behalf of Turkey; he denounced a real hypocrisy, in light of the situation in Cyprus. He urged for the development of European strategic autonomy, led by France, who he thanked for organising this conference.

Mr Cesár Sánchez Pérez, representative of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, stressed that this crisis affects the entire world: this attack on a sovereign country jeopardises the security of Europe and the world as a whole. Spain complies with treaties, and an attack on the territorial integrity of Ukraine is an attack on that of all States. He believes that the time for reflection and analysis has come to an end, and decisive action is needed, in the name of democracy and freedom.

Mr Vito Petrocelli, representative of the Senate of Italy, recalled the images of bombs falling on Ukraine. In his view, members of European parliaments have also made mistakes and are therefore responsible. For eight years, they ignored what was going on in Donbas; Ukrainian authorities also turned a blind eye to Russia's action in this region. To conclude, he said that he hopes diplomatic channels can be restored, since this is the best way to help Ukraine, bearing in mind that, as difficult as the decisions to be taken by Ukraine may be, support from Europeans must be unwavering.

Mr José Ramón Bauzá Díaz, representative of the European Parliament, expressed the view that Europe has changed over the course of just a few days. It had not

experienced war for seventy years. It is up to Europe to help Ukraine, by imposing economic sanctions on Russia and offering Ukraine what Russia is denying it: a genuine European and transatlantic prospect. Today, Ukraine is on fire. It is everyone's responsibility to defend the values that have triumphed since the fall of the Berlin wall, democracy and the rule of law, solidarity and freedom. Mr Bauzá Díaz called for swift action, rather than words. (*Applause*)

Ms Isabel Meireles, representative of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, evoked the sound of Russian boots on the Ukrainian border, while Russian cyberattacks and propaganda prevail. She recalled the threatening messages disseminated by Russian hackers, in particular on the digital portals of Ukrainian State institutions, which had already been attacked in 2015 and 2017. Russia is also destroying data. Ms Meireles called on the European Union and the European Defence Agency (EDA) to pursue a much stronger policy.

Mr Gary Gannon, representative of the Irish House of Representatives, expressed the Irish people's solidarity with the Ukrainian people. He said that there is a monster at the gates of Europe, who has launched an attack on a European democracy. The response should be swift and severe. There should be no build-up, we must react strongly right away.

Mr Gannon insisted on the fact that the European Union is a project of peace and liberty. It is Europeans' responsibility to remember where they come from and never accept compromises on their liberties. European countries could decide to boycott Russia. To conclude, Mr Gannon denounced the Russian ambassadors who spread false information and called for them to be expelled from the European Union. (*Applause*)

Mr Rafael Damián Lemus Rubiales, representative of the Senate of Spain, recalled that 26 April will mark the 85th anniversary of the Nazi bombing of the defenceless people of Guernica. At the time, democratic Spain had asked for Europe's help, but it took no action. This failure to act helped Nazism grow.

Today, pain, terror and death are spreading. The frontal attack on the principles of Europe carried out in Ukraine, a first since the Second World War, must push Europeans to respond with cohesion and unity. We must prevent Russia from doing business and suffocate the country economically first, even if there is a cost for European economies. Fighting inevitably leads to pain and sacrifice. *(Applause)*

Ms Rasa Jukneviene, representative of the European Parliament, asserted that Vladimir Putin is a war criminal who will appear before a court. She described how a Ukrainian soldier, Vitali Skakun, sacrificed himself to blow up a bridge in order to prevent Russian tanks from crossing. She urged Europeans to send weapons to Ukraine as soon as possible.

The message must be clear: Ukraine will be part of the European Union. The parliaments of the EU Member States and those of NATO must form a united pro-Ukraine front. Such a network will make it possible to coordinate actions. Ms Jukneviene considers that Europeans must do everything possible to accelerate Vladimir Putin's downfall. She concluded with: Long live Ukraine! *(Applause)*

Mr Akif Çağatay Kılıç, representative of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, expressed his solidarity with the Ukrainian people. In his view, the territorial integrity of Ukraine is inviolable. He called on Europeans not to duplicate efforts, but to act

together, in the hope that the meeting of NATO leaders to be held that afternoon will be the opportunity to send a very clear message.

The Greek Cypriots and the Greeks mentioned Turkey. He stressed that the Turkish armed forces stationed in Cyprus were there to protect them.

Mr Andrija Nikolić, representative of the Parliament of Montenegro, recalled that he comes from a country which, as John Kerry said in 2016, is “on the line of fire” between Russia and the West because of its intention to become a member of NATO. Despite pressure from Russia, Montenegro defended its Atlanticist position.

Aggressors must be prosecuted and punished. Mr Nikolić urged his colleagues not to forget what happened in the Balkans. Will the aggressor stop in Ukraine, or will he continue to spur conflict beyond its borders, in the Balkans for example? He warned that the situation must be taken very seriously, or the consequences will be disastrous. (*Applause.*)

Mr Nuno Carvalho, representative of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, said that the Russian offensive in Ukraine had been prepared well in advance. Mr Putin had built his gold reserves and reduced dollar trade from 40% to 16%. He is prepared to face the sanctions. Mr Carvalho called on Europeans not to limit their thinking to the present attack, but to prepare for the next offensive, which will lead to a different kind of war. (*Applause.*)

Mr Sergey Lagodinsky, representative of the European Parliament, remembered saying just one month ago that Europeans had forgotten what it meant to be faced with heroes. Now they are faced with an imperialist demon. He called for devastating sanctions against Russia, commensurate with the devastation caused by its attack on Ukraine, even if these sanctions are painful for Europeans.

Mr Lagondinsky called his colleagues to turn towards Poland and offer support, particularly in receiving Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian refugees. He asked Europeans not to forget them and what they owe to the Ukrainian people, who are in need of humanitarian assistance. (*Applause.*)

Mr Utku Çakırözer, representative of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, said that he strongly condemns the Russian attack on Ukraine. He called on Europeans to remember that the approach taken so far has been insufficient, and to work together with the Balkans and Turkey.

A divided Cyprus had been admitted to the European Union, he said, and everyone could see what an error that had been. He believed it was shameful that Cypriot or Greek representatives were using the conference to speak out about their situation. He pointed out that no treaty like the one governing Cyprus had been signed for Ukraine.

Mr Pavel Popescu, representative of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania, said that his great-grandmother was Ukrainian. He predicted that years from now, his daughter will ask him and his fellow politicians what they did when Mr Putin attacked Ukraine. He does not want to have to say that he was sitting peacefully in Paris, in his bubble, chit chatting.

He thanked the United States for its efforts and Germany for denouncing the “bull in the China shop” and urged others to think of Ukraine, whose people are being slaughtered. Europe represents a source of support for hundreds of millions of citizens. Will it be brave enough to defend its rights?

Mr Popescu called on Europeans to be prepared to implement long-term sanctions, by immediately cutting Russia out of the SWIFT banking system. He stressed that the current situation is not a repetition, it is history in motion. (*Applause.*)

Mr Athanasios Lioutas, representative of the Greek Parliament, replied to the Turks that Turkey is infringing the rights of an entire people, the Cypriots.

He noted that the conference today is being held in a tragic context, in which Russia was violating all international treaties. He expressed his support for the Ukrainian people and said that the Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs is helping Greeks in Mariupol develop an evacuation plan.

Allied countries have always been united in condemning the Russian attacks. Their response must include very strong sanctions against Russia. We must respond to the tragic violations of international law committed against a European country whose territorial integrity is under threat. Increasing energy independence must be a priority.

French Air Force General Éric Autellet, Major General of the French Armed Forces, was very impressed by all these remarks. Where there is a will, there is a way, he pointed out. Extensive work has been carried out to adapt and develop the structures to prepare Europeans to take action. (*Applause.*)

Mr Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, feels that this sentiment is shared at all levels. It is important to look to the future by expressing the solidarity and unity of the European Union. Europeans must come together in order to chart the future of their people and countries. This must be based on strategic autonomy, independence and freedom, and done with great enthusiasm. (*Applause.*)

Ms Patricia Mirallès, Vice-Chair of the French National Defence and Armed Forces Committee, chair, said what a pleasure and honour it had been for her to chair the session. She said that the topic is one they all held dear. She concluded by saying we are all Ukrainians, more than yesterday and less than we will be tomorrow.

The session was suspended at 1.15 p.m.

- Chaired by Ms Nathalie Loiseau, Chair of the European Parliament's Security and Defence Subcommittee -

The session resumed at 3.30 p.m.

Second Session – “What action should the European Union take in support of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity?”

Ms Nathalie Loiseau, Chair of the European Parliament's Security and Defence Subcommittee, chair of the session, thanked all the Members of Parliament and speakers for attending and thanked Ms Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who declared herself president of the Belarusian government in exile, who had come to testify. (*Applause.*)

Ms Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Leader of the Democratic Opposition of Belarus, began by thanking the President of the French Senate, Mr Larcher, and the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union for inviting her.

She said that it is not an exaggeration to say that the future of Europe, Ukraine and Belarus is being decided at this very moment. Russia and the regime of Alexander Lukashenko have launched an assault on Ukraine, but also on Europe, on a scale that has not been seen since World War II. The attack on Kyiv looks like a scene from the movies. It is hard to imagine that in 2022, people in the centre of Europe are having to take shelter in the

underground from bombings. Some are organising themselves into groups of self-defence. Among them are many Belarusians who fled their country.

The attacks on Ukraine violate the right of nations to self-determination. The President of the Russian Federation does not recognise the sovereignty nor the statehood of Ukraine and Belarus. He believes that they fall within his sphere of influence, which reveals an outdated mindset.

Ms Tsikhanouskaya said that her heart is with Ukrainians who are fighting for their country and for all of Europe. This attack is a test for Europe: it will only triumph if it is capable of preventing its neighbours from being abused without consequences. If Europe fails to stop Putin in Ukraine, he will reach Berlin or Paris one day.

The attack on Ukraine would never have been possible if Mr Lukashenko had not given Belarus to Russia. It is from Belarusian territory that helicopters, planes, tanks and other vehicles enter Ukraine. It is much faster to travel to Kyiv from occupied Belarus territories than it is from Russia.

Mr Lukashenko handed over sovereignty of Belarus to Mr Putin in 2020 in exchange for his support in keeping his puppet regime in power. Only 12% of Belarusians believe that their country must support Russia in the war against Ukraine, yet no mass protests are being held. Why? Because Belarusians who have spoken out have been imprisoned or fled their country. More than 50,000 of them are in prison, including the speaker's husband, who was sentenced to 18 years in prison. Many media outlets and businesses have been expelled or controlled. Belarus is dominated by fear.

It took long nine months for the European Union to introduce the first round of sanctions against the Belarusian authorities. The lack of a true response, limited to mere

condemnations, reinforced the regime's sense of impunity. The entire European continent is threatened by the Russian Federation.

This Sunday, with Russian troops present in the country, Belarus will hold a referendum on its neutral and non-nuclear status. Everyone must understand that Mr Lukashenko is just as much a threat to peace in Europe as the President of the Russian Federation. Europeans must act bravely and together because solidarity is their superpower. They must express this solidarity.

Everyone must understand that dictators cannot be re-educated. Any attempt at peace will only reinforce their sense of impunity. Ms Tsikhanouskaya urged Europeans to stop recognising the authorities in Minsk, which are neither legitimate nor legal. She asked for the strongest sanctions to be imposed as soon as possible. Half-measures will not succeed.

Ms Tsikhanouskaya said that after consultation with democratic forces, she had agreed to represent Belarus and to create a transitional government to lead her country toward democratic elections and independence. Mr Lukashenko does not fulfil his duties as a defender of independence. The people's will is stronger than bombs. With the help of Europeans, justice and freedom will prevail.

Ms Tsikhanouskaya asked that we support Ukraine and Belarus and we do not allow dictators to write history because it does not belong to them. *(The members of the interparliamentary conference rose for a long standing ovation.)*

Mr Christian Cambon, Chair of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee, bestowed the Senate's medal of honour on Ms Tsikhanouskaya on behalf of the President of the French Senate, as a sign of support for her fight for freedom and human rights. *(Applause.)*

Mr François Delattre, Secretary General for the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, commended Ms Tsikhanouskaya for her impressive remarks. An emergency Summit Meeting of the North Atlantic Council attended by the French President and the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, has been called to address this unprecedented situation. The members of the French Parliament have taken note of the French President's message. The use of this exceptional procedure of French democracy is commensurate with the exceptional gravity of the situation.

Despite all the diplomatic efforts that were made, Russia chose war by launching a massive military assault on Ukraine. This deliberate choice, which flies in the face of all the commitments made and repeated by Russian authorities just a few days ago, constitutes a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of the founding principles of European and international order. The French President referred to “a turning point in the history of Europe and of our country.”

By attacking Ukraine, President Putin has signalled the return of a large-scale war on the European continent. He is attacking the very foundations of European security and international order that have been built brick by brick since 1945.

The European Union and France's response to the war hinges on three complementary actions: providing Ukraine and its people with all possible support, maximising the cost of the assault for Russia by imposing unprecedented sanctions, and increasing their support for allies on the eastern flank. In all three areas, European unity has been a remarkable and constant since the start of the crisis.

The European Union's action in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is expressed in three practical ways. The association agreement signed between the

European Union and Ukraine in the spring of 2014 is the most ambitious and extensive ever concluded by the Union with an eastern partner. The European Union has therefore become Ukraine's largest donor, with €17 billion in aid disbursed since 2014.

The EU heads of state and government who gathered on the evening of 24 February for an extraordinary meeting of the European Council called to address this conflict reaffirmed their willingness to provide Ukraine with additional support. Emergency economic assistance of €1.2 billion, to which France will actively contribute, was agreed upon at this time. In addition, increased resources have been allocated to building the capacity of the Ukrainian army by means of the European Peace Facility and support for professional military training. Communication is also underway for cyber cooperation and the delivery of equipment.

At the humanitarian level, on 15 February Kyiv requested the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) by presenting a list of emergency equipment. On this basis, on 24 February, France transported 33 tons of equipment and is working to send substantial medical aid in coming days.

The second component of European action in support of Ukraine concerns sanctions. At the extraordinary meeting of the European Council on 24 February, a second package of sanctions against Russia was adopted, adding to those adopted on 22 February, in response to its recognition of the independence of separatist entities. Never before had the European Union adopted such strong measures against a State, and never had it acted so quickly to do so. These measures cover the financial, energy and transport sectors, as well as dual-use goods, export control and financing, and visas. Additional measures will also be taken against the Belarusian regime, with the establishment of a sixth sanctions package.

Transatlantic unity and cooperation between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also send a strong message to Vladimir Putin. Important decisions will be taken this day, in which France will again make an active contribution. President Emmanuel Macron has announced his decision to strengthen France's military personnel in Estonia and accelerate their deployment in Romania.

Mr François Delattre reiterated to Ms Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya France's complete solidarity with the Belarusian people and with their democratic aspirations. France is more committed than ever to Belarus' sovereignty and independence. The complicity of Alexander Lukashenko's regime in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in violation of international law and signed agreements, marks a new stage in Mr Lukashenko's process of submission to Russia.

At the end of the meeting of the European Council on 24 February, the French President stated: "Europe has no other choice but to become a power." France will spare no effort to meet what has become the great challenge of our generation. (*Applause.*)

Ms Laure Delcour, associate professor, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, visiting professor, College of Europe in Bruges, wished to come back to EU support for Ukraine's territorial integrity since 2014 and draw on lessons learned that can be applied to this current period.

For the past eight years, the EU approach to support for Ukraine's territorial integrity has been founded on three complementary pillars: redefining relations with Russia, through the global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy in 2016, which established this as a strategic challenge. The EU has addressed this challenge by revising its ties with Russia in keeping with five guiding principles established in March

2016. The first established full implementation of the Minsk agreements as a prerequisite for any changes in relations with Russia. The second pillar was strong support for the rebuilding of Ukraine by encouraging reforms that promote democratic governance and stability. The third was reflection on a strategically autonomous EU, which became all the more necessary after the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas.

The current invasion of Ukraine confirms the relevance of these three pillars and demands their revision.

The tools deployed by the European Union since 2014 reflect the global and long-term nature of its approach. The missions approved for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including advisory missions for Ukrainian internal security forces, had supported Ukraine in reforming its institutions.

The sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014 were aimed at affirming Europe's position regarding Ukrainian territorial integrity and relations with Moscow. Despite the complexity of this issue, due to the diversity of Member States' ties with Russia, Europeans agreed in 2014 on a clear position strongly condemning Russia's actions. Over the past eight years, the EU has remained coherent and united in enforcing sanctions. In this sense, the sanctions have served their purpose. However, they have failed miserably as deterrents, since they have not led to any changes in the behaviour of Russian authorities.

The European Union's coherence will likely continue and even be reinforced by the brutality of the Russian attack, but the sanctions agreed upon this week will likely prove insufficient in deterring Russian authorities in the short term. However, it is important to recall the long-term nature of the European approach. It offers a different solution than the

one presented by Russian authorities in Ukraine and, more broadly, in the post-Soviet space.

(Applause.)

Mr Andrej Černigoj, representative of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, said that the threat of EU sanctions against Russia is not sufficient. The European Union must immediately strengthen its troops in neighbouring countries and in Ukraine's airspace. The UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly must send peacekeepers to the Ukrainian border to assist refugees. Finally, the European Union must set up a military group ready to intervene should Russia succeed in taking Kyiv.

However, this will not stop the war. We must remember Chamberlain. We must not forget the situation in the Western Balkans. These horrors must not be repeated. Although it will not prevent casualties, prompt action will limit the loss of life. *(Applause.)*

Mr David Stögmüller, representative of the National Council of Austria, emphasised the importance of building a consensus within the European Union on excluding Russia from SWIFT. He urged members to consider young Ukrainians, who had grown up with the hope of a free life, and whose dream has been violently shattered. The European Union must restore this dream. It stands with Ukraine and promises a free and sovereign future. This should by no means be questioned, certainly not by Vladimir Putin. *(Applause.)*

Mr George Koukoumas, representative of the House of Representatives of Cyprus, condemned Russia's intervention in Ukraine. He said it is an act of violence committed in breach of international law and against Ukrainian sovereignty. It is important to remember the civilians, who are being bombed. The European Union must also increase its credibility. The measures taken against Putin must apply to other authoritarian regimes in Europe, including the Erdoğan regime, which is continuing its arms trade. Europe must fight

against double standards. The priority is to restore dialogue and peace, and ensure security and well-being for all.

Mr Rasmus Nordqvist, representative of Folketing of Denmark, recalled the importance of humanitarian action. In times of war, the first targets are children, minorities and the most vulnerable groups. Europeans must be aware of this reality and bear it in mind in order to deploy humanitarian action, both now and once the conflict is over. (*Applause.*)

Ms Ana María Botella Gómez, representative of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, expressed her pride following the visit of a delegation of the European Parliament to Ukraine, led by Mr David McAllister and Ms Nathalie Loiseau. Members of Parliament must be close to citizens, especially when they are suffering. In order to be a strong player, the European Union must establish a security and defence structure. Examples from Libya and the Sahel show that there are times when action is required on the ground and with support from NATO. Additional capabilities must be mobilised. The European Union must help Ukraine by using all the instruments within its reach. (*Applause.*)

Mr Léon Gloden, representative of the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies, said that Russia has left the path of democracy. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg strongly condemns the war against Ukraine and reiterates its support for the Ukrainian people. The European Union must equip itself with the means and structures needed to create a European army. It is time for us to act, not react. (*Applause.*)

Ms Ana Miguel dos Santos, representative of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, said that Russia's invasion of Ukraine constitutes a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all of Europe. Europe must not stand by passively, making threats. It must take firm and prompt action before it is too late. (*Applause.*)

Mr Niklas Karlsson, representative of the Swedish *Riksdag*, agreed with this, saying it is time to take action. The support of European Union Member States for Ukraine must be undivided. The invasion of Ukraine was unprovoked and illegal. Members must stand with Ukraine in the name of European solidarity. The sanctions must be implemented swiftly and destabilise the Russian economy. The European Union must not back down in the fight to defend its fundamental values and way of life. *(Applause.)*

Mr Alekos Tryfonides, representative of the House of Representatives of Cyprus, said that in light of the situation in Ukraine, the European Union must determine its position on the international stage quickly. Europe must decide quickly the kind of player it wishes to become. It cannot stand by, passively witnessing the suffering of the Ukrainian people. It must seize this opportunity to build an authentic common security and defence policy capable of ensuring peace, stability, and cooperation among its Member States. *(Applause.)*

Mr Iñigo Barandiaran, representative of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, said that as the situation continues to change by the hour, the responses required will necessarily change. The question is what decisions the Ukrainian institutions will make and what reality will emerge for the Ukrainian people if Russian troops put an end to the current Ukrainian government. The situation is difficult, and unity of action is vital. *(Applause.)*

Mr Enrico Aimi, representative of the Senate of Italy, stressed the need to pursue the path of strategic autonomy. The European Union must become a superpower by defending its interests, like the United States and China, without forgetting its Judaeo-Christian, Greek and Roman roots, nor the principles of peace and freedom championed by its people. To achieve this and avoid backing down in the face of the true civil war that is underway in Europe, it must take steps towards military and energy autonomy. *(Applause.)*

Ms Beatriz Gomes Dias, representative of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, expressed her country's rejection of the imperialist conflict and invasion of Ukraine and stressed the importance of remembering all those living in Ukraine. She urged for measures to protect Ukrainian refugees in Europe and defend human rights. All possible action must be taken to alleviate the Ukrainians' suffering and ensure their protection. *(Applause.)*

Mr Gerard Craughwell, representative of the Senate of Ireland, expressed the need to reduce the number of Russian diplomats in the Member States, stressing that the current developments are unacceptable. The European Union is not afraid of Vladimir Putin because the Member States are strong together. *(Applause.)*

Mr Juan Antonio Delgado Ramos, representative of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, stressed Spain's support for the Ukrainians. Europe must consider what measures it can take in addition to condemning the attacks and imposing economic sanctions. It must be a protagonist of its present and future. The UN must also play an important role because diplomacy cannot be abandoned. Finally, Europe must establish humanitarian corridors, but without repeating the mistakes made in Syria. *(Applause.)*

Mr Akif Çağatay Kiliç, representative of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, remarked on the strong support for Ukraine expressed since the start of the meeting and said that efforts are being made to find an appropriate response to the situation. Mr Akif Çağatay Kiliç, who arrived in Paris from Sarajevo, stressed the importance of remembering the past. Nothing is over yet. He said they must not forget the words of their enemies nor the silence of their friends.

Europe is not defined by one belief or one culture. The issue between Turkey and Cyprus remains. Mr Akif Çağatay Kiliç raised the question of how many Russian banks are still operating on the Cypriot side of the island.

Mr Özgür Ceylan, representative of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, said that the world must not remain silent regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the cry of the Ukrainian people. Dependence on oil and gas poses a serious threat. Renewable energy can provide an effective asset for the world's future. Mr Özgür Ceylan condemned the remarks of the Cypriot Members of Parliament, stating that no comparison can be made between what is happening in Ukraine today and the situation in Cyprus. Turkey has brought peace to the island. Raising this issue at such an important meeting as this shows a lack of sincerity.

Mr Tobias Ellwood, representative of the United Kingdom's House of Commons, said that seeing Russian troops enter Kyiv, a foreign capital, is unthinkable in the 21st century. The rules of the game have changed. Disinformation campaigns have been launched. The Duma has approved Putin's actions. Major questions are being raised about the security of the European Union. NATO is the only asset capable of changing the situation. But this option has not been used. For now, their only choice is to provide the Ukrainian people with weapons and supplies and plan for the creation of a neutral zone between Kyiv and the rest of the European Union.

The European Union is passively watching the events but has proven powerless in shaping them. What is happening right now is bigger than Ukraine. This is a challenge to the European way of life. After decades of relative peace, Europe has entered a new era of instability. It is up to European countries to work together to meet the challenge posed to

them by Vladimir Putin. The emerging alliance between Russia and China is a complete change for the future of global security.

Ms Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Leader of the Democratic Opposition of Belarus, expressed her gratitude for being invited to Paris to speak on behalf of the Belarusian people. Like all the other speakers, she supports Ukraine in response to Russia's invasion.

Ms Tsikhanouskaya said that the next negotiations between the parties to the conflict must not be held in Minsk, because the Belarusian regime is a belligerent aggressor, like Russia. She said that the European Union must support Ukraine with courage and unity. She concluded by thanking the Assembly and wishing long life to Belarus, Ukraine and Europe. (*Applause.*)

According to **Mr François Delattre, Secretary General for the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs**, who summarised the talks, all the speakers expressed their solidarity with Ukraine, openly condemned the Russian attack, and called for the strengthening of the European Union's role of diplomacy and defence. French diplomacy supports these three positions. France is pleased with the progress made on European defence and security. This is also the purpose of the European Union's Strategic Compass. The European Union's energy autonomy is also an important challenge that must be patiently pursued.

Mr Delattre said that France is working with the United Nations and the G7 to convince its partners around the world to condemn Russia's actions. It is also important remain vigilant regarding possible Russian intervention in Bosnia, Moldova and Georgia, as

well as in Mali. European unity and solidarity are not empty words. They must now lead to action. *(Applause.)*

Ms Laure Delcour, associate professor, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, visiting professor, College of Europe in Bruges, said that in addition to the emotional human aspects, this conflict represents a historic turning point that will shape Europe and the world for the next forty years. She said the European Union must finalise its development in the areas of defence, energy and migration, and become fully autonomous on the international stage.

Ms Delcour questioned the purpose of Russia's intervention in Ukraine. Is it to occupy or annihilate the country? In any case, other countries in the post-Soviet space and in the Western Balkans must remain vigilant.

This conflict will likely result in a lasting, if not definitive, break with the Russian authorities. However, it is important to maintain connections with Russian society, including NGOs and students who are currently protesting against the invasion of Ukraine in Moscow and St. Petersburg. We must help them prepare the Russia of tomorrow. *(Applause.)*

Mr David McAllister, Chair of the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, warmly thanked the French Members of Parliament, the Senate and the National Assembly for organising this conference. Given the circumstances, he said that the conference had been an exceptional one that they would not soon forget.

He expressed his hope that attendance would be just as high at the next interparliamentary conference to be held in Prague on 4-6 September 2022. *(Applause.)*

Mr Joël Guerriau, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces of the French Senate, apologised for the absence of Mr

Christian Cambon and Mr Jean-Louis Boulanges, who were meeting with the Prime Minister to prepare a future parliamentary debate on the situation in Ukraine.

Mr Guerriau said that he was very pleased to see his European colleagues in person. This type of meeting had not been possible for the last two years. It was now possible thanks to a collective victory against Covid-19. Now, in light of the invasion of Ukraine, victory must be won in the same way against totalitarianism.

Mr Cambon had contacted several Ukrainian members of parliament who were preparing to fight. Their courage is admirable. They are requesting equipment, financial support and the exclusion of Russia from the SWIFT payment system. They fear the installation of a puppet, pro-Russian government that would favour the end of a free and democratic Ukraine.

Mr Guerriau recalled that Georges Clemenceau, who had left his mark on the French Senate during the First World War, once said: “To take a decision, there must be an odd number of people, and three are already too many.” He was pleased to see that all the Members of Parliament from different European countries had spoken with one voice. Ukraine is not the only country under threat. All the democracies of the European Union are as well. Europe’s values, such as humanism and freedom of expression, must be defended. All the participants at the meeting want democracy to continue, both in Ukraine and in Europe.
(Applause.)

Ms Nathalie Loiseau, Chair of the European Parliament’s Security and Defence Subcommittee, joined Mr David McAllister in thanking the Senate and the National Assembly.

All the speakers had demonstrated their unity and expressed solidarity with Ukraine. Europe must finally speak the language of power and uphold its democratic values. National and European Members of Parliament will contribute to this work. An extraordinary plenary meeting of the European Parliament will be held to address the situation in Ukraine on Tuesday, 1st March. (*Applause.*)

The meeting was declared closed at 4.45 p.m.