Statement on the current situation in Ukraine

CPMR Balkan & Black Sea Commission stands with Ukraine and its people

Approved by the BBSC Members on 24 March 2022

Since its establishment in 2004, the CPMR Balkan & Black Sea Commission (BBSC) and its Member Regions stand for peace, solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect between people, regions and national governments in the wider Black Sea Region and in Europe.

The BBSC Member Regions have specific geographic, historical, economic and social boundaries with Ukraine and the Russian Federation and hope to continue implementing our joint initiatives soon for the benefit and prosperity of our citizens.

We, the Member Regions of the CPMR Balkan & Black Sea Commission:

- **are gravely concerned by the recent developments in our region** that do not bode well for regional and international peace and cooperation. We support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and condemn the invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation.

- **stand with Ukraine and the victims of this war** and maintain the hope that dialogue and diplomacy will prevail for an urgent ceasefire to stop the bloodshed and human suffering and return to an environment conducive to regional cooperation in the wider Black Sea Region and Europe.

- **welcome the acts of solidarity of regional and local actors to provide aid to Ukraine’s refugees.**

- **welcome that the European Union is showing its willingness to support Ukraine through various actions, such as providing emergency humanitarian assistance to the people.** The European Commission proposal under development to grant higher co-financing rates for ESIF funded projects aimed at helping refugees from Ukraine is a step in the right direction.

- **appeal to the European Union to contribute in a peaceful manner to the ceasefire and to protect the people from danger in the Ukrainian territory and the countries of reception.**

- **condemn any revisionist rhetoric dangerous to peace and security.**
- support our fellow member, Kherson Regional State Administration, and will work in the framework of the CPMR together with our fellow members from across Europe, and international partner organisations, to promote further multi-level and interregional cooperation, as well as to encourage more people-to-people, research-to-research and business-to-business cooperation to help recovery from the results of this crisis.

- strongly support the provision of humanitarian and medical aid via the ports of the Black Sea (i.e., Odessa) for all civil victims of this conflict. The Greek Members of the BBSC welcome and support the initiative of the Region of Western Greece to encourage the Hellenic Government to take action with the transformation of a ship to an in situ floating hospital in the port of Odessa and expect the approval of both parties for this peaceful initiative.

- need to work harder as Regions to bring all neighbouring countries closer together and understand in advance the existing problems and tensions of any kind and try to work them out with extensive dialogue and mutual understanding. Common regional projects in all sectors are also important in order to avoid conflicts. The inclusion of more countries in the EU, without any exclusion, is a road to peace, prosperity and growth. Our vision must remain a Europe without any military conflicts in the west, east, north or south but with mutual respect and understanding of local and regional differences of any kind.