

## Emmaus International and Emmaus Europe joint statement on the situation in Ukraine

Montreuil, 3 March 2022

**For over a week Ukraine has been bravely facing an invasion of its territory by Russia. We reiterate that we stand in full solidarity with the Ukrainian people, victims of unjustified aggression that violates international law.**

Regardless of what one might say or think about the origins of this war, one thing is clear: it is a new, dramatic and terrifying demonstration of the imperialist policies that have been developing since the end of the 20th century.

Our movement, created in the aftermath of the Second World War, works with the most excluded people in over forty countries. Over the last thirty years, we have sadly been eyewitnesses to these developments around the world. We have observed the development of inequalities in the distribution of wealth, the cynical and endless intensification of policies of exclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable people, especially those in exile, along with the rise of nationalism and fundamentalism, fostered and exploited by unscrupulous leaders.

The war in Ukraine is now affecting Europe, and we welcome its unanimous and effective response. The generosity of people is evident and we hope that this solidarity, expressed in the dark hours of this conflict, will continue in building a Europe of peace, justice and sharing.

It is with this hope that we wish to address this message today to the European institutions and the Member States of the European Union.

Like the Emmaus groups, which have been practising unconditional welcome since their creation, we call on you to unconditionally welcome all the people fleeing this conflict. We call for open borders, full respect for the principle of non-refoulement and for a broad application of the refugee status. We condemn, in particular, the refoulement or differentiated treatment of people according to their nationality or origin.

This protection must also be offered to all those who, in Russia or in other countries involved in this conflict, are fighting for peace and democracy and, as a result, are suffering repression.

Lastly, there is an urgent need to seek, by all available means, a de-escalation and an end to this conflict. We express our full support for all members of civil society in Ukraine, Russia and other countries who advocate peace. The road to peace is not always the easiest, quite the opposite. In the words of our founder, Abbé Pierre: *"It is not from violence, mobilised to change others, that peace can emerge. But (...) from genuinely applying oneself (...) in the service of the welfare of all. Abnegation of people; and of nations"*.

Emmaus International  
**Patrick Atohou**  
Chair



Emmaus Europe  
**Carina Aaltonen**  
Chair

