CEC-CCEE JOINT DECLARATION ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE

We, the members of the Joint Committee of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences and the Conference of European Churches, gathered in Bratislava for our annual meeting, call on the leaders of nations and the international community to do everything in their power to end the current war that is destroying lives and causing untold suffering.

The heart of the Christian faith is peace and reconciliation, exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ: *"Jesus never promoted violence or intolerance. He openly condemned the use of force to gain power over others"* (*Fratelli Tutti* 238). His humility and His compassion for those who suffer were at the centre of His ministry: *"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless"* (Matthew 9:36).

Religion cannot be used as a means to justify this war. All religions, and we as Christians, are united in condemning the Russian aggression, the crimes that are being committed against the people of Ukraine and the blasphemy that is the misuse of religion in this context.

Witnessing the great suffering of those living in, and fleeing from, Ukraine, we urge religious and political authorities to engage in true dialogue and promote a lasting peace.

We give thanks for the tremendous work carried out by the churches and NGOs, as well as local and state authorities in the neighbouring countries of Ukraine and beyond, in welcoming those leaving their homes and escaping the war.

We also acknowledge the voices of the Russian people who are courageously protesting against the invasion, and we stand in solidarity with them in their struggle.

We exhort the continuation of all life-affirming endeavours that give witness to the Love of Christ for our neighbours.

We continue to pray for the gift of peace and call on all Christians to join us in this prayer while strengthening their efforts in affirming the value of life and in actively promoting reconciliation.

21 March 2022, Bratislava