



WILPF call on European governments to de-escalate conflict in Ukraine

All European governments, the OSCE and the EU must invest in dialogue and peace through support to women's organizations and networks of peace builders and human rights defenders in the region.

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We, European sections and groups of WILPF, are the world's oldest global women's peace organisation. Together with other civil society organisations of feminist peace builders and human rights defenders in the OSCE region, we are very concerned about the insufficient role of Europe and European countries in promoting a peaceful, diplomatic solution to the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine. Instead Europe is fostering an increasingly militarised development.

As women's organisations and networks, we cooperate in numerous projects with (women) activists beyond "dividing" lines, convinced that confidence and genuine security can be built only on a long-term positive and common vision for peace, equality and justice put in practice. We are connected from local to regional and global level and we **care** in solidarity.

We are not ready to accept war, ongoing threats of military interventions and inflammatory rhetoric as a "normality" because it increases instability in an already very fragile (economic and psychosocial) situation – especially difficult for women. Out of WILPF's historical encouragement of resistance against war and our experiences in peacebuilding – we raise our voices against destructive militarised logic.

The work with women in Ukraine's conflict-affected region demonstrates how women and civilians in general are impacted by the (in-) direct consequences of the war that began in 2014. Thousands of deaths and civilian wounded have been recorded since then. Women's (economic) vulnerabilities in daily life and struggle for survival generate new fears and insecurities. On the other hand, women are powerful actors of change and our specific contributions to sustainable peace and confidence building must be supported and reported constantly.

We are releasing this open statement to call on the governments in Europe, on the European Parliament and the European Commission, OSCE (SG, CiO, GU) to take immediate steps to de-escalate and demilitarize the conflict and to engage diplomatically in long-term peace and security talks with all stakeholders involved, including neighbouring countries and regions. Deterrence, growing military presence and authoritarianism are not apt to solve conflicts. The risk of new dividing lines (of cold war times) is not apt to solve conflicts and to strengthen European cohesion.

We support the growing political will of states to openly refer to a feminist foreign policy on the basis of the implementation of the WPS Agenda. We are eager to see political consequences: disarmament and de-militarisation is one, a re-definition of security another - understood as a complex human/genuine security - and last but not least equal and meaningful participation of women on all levels of negotiation and decision making in the spirit of the implementation of UNSCR1325 on all track levels.

OUR CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS IN EUROPE and MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS

To de-escalate the conflict and to ensure peace and security in Ukraine and Eastern Europe, we are calling on the governments to

- Implement the commitments to the UN Women, Peace & Security Agenda (UNSCR 1325) that require a substantial, meaningful role for women's participation in the negotiations and women's leadership for conflict prevention. Ensure that women from all sides of the conflict are invited to mediate a diplomatic resolution to the conflict and an agreement for lasting peace.
- Give long-term support for civil society groups, especially women's groups, working in creative confidence and trust-building initiatives - partly cross border, on care in the spirit of human security and principles of a feminist economy. Support constantly and substantially advocacy and training in mediation and peaceful conflict settings.
- Invest in health care and social infrastructure. As the corona pandemic has made abundantly clear: there is need to substantial investments in health care, social infrastructure, climate justice and economic empowerment in the sense of a feminist and sustainable economy.
- Work throughout the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a substantial bridge between East and West, linking the three dimensions (security, human dimension and economy-environment) in a feminist spirit of a holistic approach towards peace and using and strengthening OSCE's mechanisms and structures such as the "women peace builders and mediator's network".
- Abolish the compulsory military registration (of women) in Ukraine.
- Strengthen the United Nations to de-escalate conflict with Russia over Ukraine by supporting all forms of diplomacy and negotiations on the basis of a common and comprehensive security strategy.
- Take up the idea of Nobel Peace prize awardees: "We have a simple proposal for humankind: the governments of all UN member-states should negotiate a joint reduction of their military expenditure by 2% every year for five years".

Signed by:

WILPF Germany, Ukraine, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, UK, Italy, Switzerland

Public Alternative/Ukraine, Democracy today Armenia, Birduino Kirgizstan

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