THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

COMECE

Statement of H.Em. Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ, President of COMECE

on the situation in Ukraine and in Europe

I am deeply worried by the latest reports of escalating military actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, opening up the alarming scenario of an armed conflict causing horrific human suffering, death and destruction. Today, peace on the whole European continent and beyond is facing a serious threat.

On behalf of the Bishops of COMECE, I wish to reiterate our fraternal closeness and solidarity with the people and institutions of Ukraine.

Sharing Pope Francis' feelings of anguish and concern, we appeal to Russian authorities to refrain from further hostile actions that would inflict even more suffering and disregard the principles of international law. War is a grave affront to human dignity and it has no place in our continent.

Therefore, we urgently ask the international community, including the European Union, not to cease seeking a peaceful solution to this crisis through diplomatic dialogue. We call on the European leaders gathering today for a special meeting of the European Council to show unity and endorse measures promoting de-escalation and confidence-building, while avoiding any steps that could potentially reinforce the violent conflict.

In the light of the emerging humanitarian situation provoked by the on-going hostilities, we appeal to European societies and governments to welcome refugees fleeing their homeland in Ukraine from war and violence and looking for international protection. It is our vocation, our responsibility and our duty to welcome and protect them as brothers and sisters.

Joining Pope Francis, we pray to Our Lady, the Queen of Peace, that the Lord may enlighten those bearing political responsibility to "*examine their consciences seriously before God, who is the God of peace and not of war; who is the Father of all, not just of some, who wants us to be brothers and not enemies*".

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