DRAFT Emergency Resolution Nr. 1 tabled by the EPP Presidency to the EPP Congress, Rotterdam (The Netherlands), 31st May – 1st June 2022

"United in Solidarity with Ukraine: Defending European Values against Putin's War"

Introduction

Russia's brutal military aggression against Ukraine changed our world overnight. Putin's unprovoked war threatens European security — along with that of the international order itself, and with it world peace. Ukrainians are not only fighting and even sacrificing their lives to defend their homeland and Ukraine's independence; they are bravely fighting on behalf of that same democracy and peace we in the EU enjoy.

Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine has changed the realities of European security. Putin's Russia does not respect basic international values and principles: such as peace, respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and restraint in not resorting to military aggression to settle political disputes. Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the EU and its Member States, together with our allies and partners around the world, have taken decisive steps to implement far-reaching sanctions intended to isolate Putin's regime, to restrain the economic resources of Russia's war machine and to give political, economic and military support to counter the threats to Ukrainian statehood**.**

We have been shocked and horrified by the images of Ukrainian civilians killed as they tried to flee or buried beneath the rubble of bombed hospitals or houses, and most of all by the Russian atrocities committed in Bucha and elsewhere in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. The Putin regime's war crimes cannot go unpunished. We will never accept these acts of genocide against people and blatant violations of the international law, the UN Charter and the principles enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Not only the West but countries all around the world stand united against Russia's full-scale military aggression against Ukraine. We strongly support the 2 March 2022 United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning Russia's invasion and demonstrating the unity of the international community. Sanctions must be comprehensive effective and aimed at the cessation of all trade with Russia — including, ultimately, Russia's energy exports. We cannot allow war crimes to be paid for with European money.

Russia under Putin's regime has become the main threat to the security and stability of the European continent. There can be no return to a status-quo in relations with Russia unless

there is a total withdrawal of troops from Ukraine and a fundamental change of attitude in Russia towards their neighbours.

From the very first days of invasion, the Lukashenka regime in Belarus has provided full support for the Russian military advance against Ukraine, especially granting the use of Belarusian airports and bases for missile and air bombing of the northern part of Ukraine, as well as the use of the Belarusian border with Ukraine for the advance of the Russian armed forces towards Kyiv. Without such support the war crimes in Bucha, Borodyanka, Irpin and dozens of other towns and villages near the capital of Ukraine would have never happened. We must hold Lukashenka's regime fully accountable and responsible for the Russian atrocities in Ukraine.

We must acknowledge that the threats posed by Russia to the EU and its Eastern neighbourhood were very often either underestimated or else lacked bold, appropriate and timely responses. Hence, in addition to providing vital immediate support to Ukraine, the EU and its Member Statas must reflect on past mistakes and re-assess long-term strategy towards both Russia and Ukraine. The EU, and the West in general, bear partial responsibility for emboldening Putin's regime by a long-term lack of robust response to Putin's measures of developing energy, financial, political and informational influence in the collective West, as well as inability to assume a strategic responsibility in its immediate neighbourhood and stalling the integrational process. The EU must lose no further time, but realise its responsibility and assume geopolitical leadership vis-à-vis the Eastern Neighbourhood countries - foremost Ukraine, which is defending on the battlefield the very values upon which our European Union is based.

In the short-term, we must do everything in order to achieve Russia's defeat in this war and force Russia to end its war in Ukraine and restore Ukraine's territorial integrity: by providing all necessary and requested political, military, economic, financial and humanitarian assistance and by strengthening sanctions and introducing — as soon as is feasible, and so long as the last occupying soldier has not left Ukrainian's soil — a temporary embargo on Russian oil, gas and nuclear fuel (in addition to the coal embargo). This must be done while at the same time mitigating the negative effects on our economies and citizens. Putin must be substantially weakened so he is not in a position to wage another war elsewhere. Throughout this war, the unity and coordination of the European Member States has been and will be paramount. Continuous efforts are necessary to bridge diverging interests and viewpoints between Member States.

The EU must grant Ukraine EU candidate status and start the accession negotiations without delay. This can already be achieved at the European Councill in June 2022, which would be a timely message to the Ukrainian people in their fight for European values and show a clear sign of EU support and assistance for the brave Ukrainian people defending not only their country but the whole of Europe. EPP will support and assist Ukraine on its path towards EU with the first stage of integration into the EU Single Market as soon as possible. Ukraine must, as any future Member State, fulfil all political, judicial and economic necessary preconditions before joining the European Union as a full member, and the European Union must be able to absorb new members. We call for the European Commission to make proposals for intermediary steps to integrate candidate countries into the European Union on their way to full membership.

In the medium-term, the EU must lead and coordinate a process — a Marshall-like Plan — together with its international partners, of reviving and rebuilding Ukraine: to help Ukraine to recover from the destruction Russia has caused, to develop a strong and modern Ukrainian economy and to integrate Ukraine into the EU Single Market. The recent EU initiative of the Ukraine Solidarity Trust Fund, which was launched on 5 May 2022, may serve as a solid basis for such a Plan. Russia bears responsibility and must be brought to justice and pay for its aggressive, destructive actions.

In the long-term, the EU needs the capacity to strengthen peace and security on the continent and to contribute to global peace and security by reforming Europe's security-and-defence architecture. We need to fully end our fossil fuel imports from, and our energy dependency on, Russia. Given the dramatic changes in the geopolitical context, it is of paramount importance that we reinforce the EU's open strategic autonomy. We need to reconsider our foreign policy priorities primarily towards Russia, as well as to strengthen the EU's role and significance on the global stage. To this end, the European Union must continue to deepen its integration process and follow its process of enlargements, as well as to rethink the EU's integration policy and the EU's strategic responsibility for the stability and development of its neighbourhood, by supporting the aspirations of those countries willing to join the EU and ready to meet the high integration standards.

Supporting Ukrainians and Ukrainian refugees

Despite the mitigation efforts, the humanitarian crises facing Ukraine and Ukrainians remains enormous. Special, urgent arrangements are needed to allow coordinated, sustainable aid for and into Ukraine, corresponding to the actual needs.

Rebuilding Ukraine's infrastructure and economy must start now, to minimise future losses. Ukraine's government alone will not be able to shoulder that burden; our assistance will be vital. EU and NATO members, for instance, must work towards a system whereby responsibility is allocated for different regions or big cities as regards the aid delivery or reconstruction. Such a patronage system will help ensure coordination and effectiveness.

Reconstruction of liberated areas, such as Bucha and Irpin, can start now. But besides such immediate needs, the EU must develop a Marshall-like, EU recovery plan for Ukraine focusing on longer-term investments into Ukraine's economy, which will encourage recovery and modernisation and take into account the country's EU membership perspective and the financial requirements needed to fulfil EU membership obligations. The Ukraine recovery plan should utilise the EU's capacity to raise new funds for Ukraine in international markets, learning from experience of Next Generation EU fund, donors funds, war reparations and assets seized under the Russian sanctions.

The European Union, EU Member States and their local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, businesses and volunteers have shown unprecedented support to Ukrainians and persons fleeing the war by offering them universal protection and swift access to shelter, services, jobs, care and education. Particular attention has been paid to helping and protecting children.

The EU, for the first time ever, has activated the Temporary Protection Directive, offering quick assistance and clear legal status to Ukrainians arriving in the EU. Beyond the immediate support provided in terms of assistance at the border, reception and civil protection, the EU has taken further steps to help Member States ensure beneficiaries can effectively access rights to education, healthcare, housing and work.

The Commission has also developed new guidelines to facilitate the recognition of professional qualifications obtained in Ukraine, making it easier for employers and training institutions to hire and further help Ukrainian arrivals.

The European Commission, together with Member States, has set up a solidarity mechanism for transferring between Member States patients in urgent need of specialised hospital care, for whom more than 10,000 beds have been made available. Transfer hubs at the border have been set up, in close coordination with the WHO, in Slovakia, Romania and Moldova to further smooth the process of patient transfers. To support those fleeing the horror of war, the Commission has set up a network of mental health professionals offering trauma support to refugees in their native language; the Commission will contribute 7 million Euros to the Red

Cross's work on mental health. Vaccines, especially for children, and chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear countermeasures have been donated to Ukraine and neighbouring countries. And more than 20,000 tons of equipment — such as tents, blankets, medical aid — have reached Ukraine via the logistics hubs set up in Poland, Slovakia and Romania.

The EU's support for many children and teachers fleeing from the war has included strong and immediate support to Member States' education systems: to preserve continuity and foster the integration of Ukrainian pupils. The EU has also supported Ukrainian researchers, scientists and innovators, notably by launching the European Research Area for Ukraine portal (ERA4Ukraine). The EU has taken concrete action to support Ukrainian artists, cultural professionals and culture organisations, such as with the 'Creatives Unite' platform, and mobilised the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) to support Member States in delivering emergency equipment and material for the protection of Ukraine's cultural heritage.

Supporting Ukraine's defence and resilience

In response to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, the EU has shown unity and strength and has provided Ukraine with coordinated humanitarian, political, financial and material support. We must continue to do everything we can to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU Member States should provide support to Ukraine in the form of modern high-technology weapons and ammunition, including among others effective air and missile defence systems and heavy weaponry.

The EPP welcomes the EU's decision to provide 1,5 billion Euros in arms and other aid to the Ukrainian military through the European Peace Facility. This shows that the EU can provide crucial aid to a country subjected to armed aggression. The EPP welcomes the US Congress's overwhelming approval in April of the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022. With Ukraine still in desperate need of more military aid, the EU should increase the purchase and delivery of weapons to Ukraine under the European Peace Facility, in coordination with NATO. This would show that the West is serious about responding to Europe's greatest security threat since World War II.

And yet despite EU efforts and solidarity, we must also be honest: since the war started, the West has pledged less than EUR 10 billion in weapon systems and ammunition — much of this still pending delivery. This despite estimations that Ukraine loses EUR 400 million — per day — in ammunition or in lost or destroyed weapons. Projected forward, this comes to a total of EUR 100-120 billion per year in required military spending.

It is therefore clear that our aid versus Ukraine's needs is wholly insufficient; a more decisive amount — two or three times greater in value — is needed. This will demand a stable system of financial aid for Ukraine's needed purchases. There should be no taboos on heavy weaponry deliveries, as these can significantly shorten the duration of the war.

We must continue to welcome into the EU all Ukrainians in need of protection and assistance. Alongside partners and allies forming a large international coalition, we must isolate Putin's regime economically and politically. We must urgently establish functioning green corridors allowing humanitarian aid to enter and refugees to leave. The numerous war crimes and atrocities committed by Putin's regime demand proper international investigation and prosecution in the form of a special international tribunal in line with international law.

War crimes, crimes of aggression and atrocities against Ukraine, which have a systemic nature with genocidal features, must be punished, and a special tribunal for Putin and Lukashenka, who conspired with Putin and allowed use of Belarusian territory for assault on Ukraine, must be created.

We call on formulating 'the list of Bucha' to enlist all those responsible for war crimes in Ukraine.

The EU as a regional bloc of countries should be involved immediately in the preparations for convening an ad hoc tribunal to hold Russia and its allies to account for the war of aggression against Ukraine. The practical work can begin swiftly with setting of a compact prosecutor's office to get there earlier and collect all necessary resources to start the proceedings. The Hague can be a venue to ensure the continuous cooperation and complementarity with the ICC.

All sanctions must be coordinated and synchronised with transatlantic allies and like-minded international partners to maximise their effectiveness and effectively fight any attempts to circumvent them. We welcome the essential and unprecedented unity of the international community, in particular EU unity with the US, Canada, UK and other NATO allies as well as with the G7 and other partners, such as Norway, Switzerland, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan; but we must continue to build on this momentum. We must expand sectoral sanctions; enlarge the list for individual sanctions; increase the number of banks unplugged from the SWIFT system; continue exploring the possibility of confiscating Russian high officials' and regime-related oligarchs' property and assets; and ban from EU territory all Russian TV propaganda. Sanctions on Belarus must mirror those introduced against Russia in order to close any loopholes allowing Putin to enlist Lukashenka's aid in circumventing

sanctions. At the same time, we should consider extending certain sanctions against countries or individuals, who - contrary to worldwide condemnation - continue supporting or cooperating in or with Russia. For concrete results, our response needs to be en masse and unified.

Re-building an EU security-and-defence architecture

The European project is based on peace, solidarity, reconciliation and cooperation — built on the ashes of two devastating world wars. Our Union has overcome enormous challenges to achieve the longest period of peace in our continent's history. We must now think strategically of a fourth pillar, a Defence Union: it is only with a strong security-and-defence policy that we can deter hostile actors and secure our peace and prosperity.

Putin's Russia's aggression and criminal war against Ukraine is clear evidence that authoritarian Russia, led by the Kremlin regime, is the biggest threat to security and stability to the whole European continent, including European Union Member States. The long-term peace and stability on the European continent can be achieved only if Russia transforms itself, moving towards democracy.

The European Union in its long-term security strategy needs to combine two approaches: first, to invest in the spread and success of democracies in the Eastern part of the European continent, where success of Ukraine's defence, recovery and integration towards the EU can inspire transformations towards democracy in Russia and Belarus; second, to invest in military capabilities of the EU to deter and defend itself against the aggressive authoritarian Kremlin regime under Putin.

Security-and-defence cooperation within the EU has taken significant steps forward. Since 2016, the Union has launched ambitious initiatives in joint European research and capability development. The EU's latest multiannual budget contains — for the first time ever — security-and-defence-related budget lines. The EU has taken steps to open its defence initiatives to third-country partners in the framework of PESCO. And the EU has raised its level of ambition regarding cooperation with NATO. All this helps the EU to protect its citizens and act as a more effective security provider and more attractive partner to allies and partners, such as the US, UK, NATO, UN, AU and ASEAN. We recognise the historical importance of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a body that has been instrumental in containing conflicts, but regret that it faces the most serious challenge since its creation due to Russia's war on Ukraine.

We must ensure that the EU can act effectively in crises and respond appropriately to military threats: to protect its Member States and closest partners. We have received a clear wake-up call. We must increase Europe's resilience and hard power based on the lessons of the recent Russian military aggression against Ukraine. It is time to unleash the political will of the Member States.

The EU's first priority should be the security and prosperity of the EU and its citizens. To this end, the EU should take further steps to protect critical European infrastructure (e.g., hospitals as well as energy, transport and digital infrastructure, such as undersea cables) as well as Europe's security of supply. It should also develop a detailed and comprehensive framework against terrorism - combat its root causes, identify perpetrators and cooperate with third countries in order to fight the phenomenon and focus on organised crime, cross-border controls, human trafficking, returns and readmissions. Our citizens should not be afraid of any "invisible" enemy. The EU should further operationalise its own mutual assistance and solidarity clauses in such a way that Member States can use them, especially in situations of hybrid or cyberattacks, to request needed assistance from EU partners. On the other hand, the EU must also further refine and develop its approach to security of supply. The European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) should therefore develop an EU security-of-supply strategy which would put all existing activities in this area under a common framework.

The EPP has always defended the target of investing at least 2% of GDP on national defence, and we continue to urge Member States on this. It is more critical than ever — for all EU Member States, including those not in NATO — to bolster our common defence: to ensure EU resilience and capacity to respond to crises and challenges, and to strengthen the transatlantic alliance. Member States also need to agree on a common catalogue and hierarchy of threats to the European Union.

The EU must assume greater responsibility for its security, both within EU borders and abroad. The EPP welcomes the recently adopted Strategic Compass, which will enable the EU to act more quickly and decisively when facing crises, to secure our citizens against fast-changing threats, to invest in the capabilities and technologies we need and to cooperate with our partners to achieve common goals. The Strategic Compass has set new EU goals and targets in the areas of crisis management, resilience, capabilities and partnerships. Regular high-level political monitoring will be vital in implementing the Strategic Compass.

Faced with a transformed security landscape due to Russia's war against Ukraine, the EU and its Member States must step up their defence capabilities and take steps towards a genuine

Defence Union. This is needed to ensure that the EU can act effectively in crises, can protect its Members States and can help closest partners and can contribute more to transatlantic burden-sharing on security. It would serve as a starting point for implementing a common European defence policy, in line with the provision laid out in Article 42(2) TEU.

To improve the credibility and effectiveness of our security and defence cooperation, the EU Commission should make proposals to strengthen a European defence commitment (Article 42 (7) TEU).

To deter Russia, Europe will need to be able to deploy more troops and equipment at short notice. In the frameworks of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF), the EU must prioritise strategic, future-oriented projects which can clearly help the EU to become a more effective actor. We therefore call on the Council to ensure all existing PESCO projects be implemented in a timely and effective manner. Furthermore, PESCO should welcome participation of third countries including Ukraine, and should be enlarged for joint research and common procurement. This will help to eliminate duplication and boost complementarity as well as to improve land, sea and air interoperability, military mobility and logistics. Greater funding and simplified procedures for the military mobility projects is needed in order to boost in shortest possible time the required infrastructural developments, especially in the Eastern part of the EU.

The 2018 Brussels Joint Declaration emphasised that a strong EU-NATO partnership is vital to both partners in addressing their security challenges. In light of grave joint security threats posed by Russia, and in view of the new Strategic Concept to be adopted at NATO's 2022 Madrid Summit, EU-NATO cooperation — per the principles of mutual openness, transparency and complementarity — must be revised and re-assessed. Both the EU and NATO should serve to enhance deterrence and protect our borders. Hence, we welcome the substantial increase of NATO troops in Eastern-flank countries since the start of this war. We support a comprehensive EU-NATO approach to crisis management and operations and encourage countries who are members of both the EU and NATO to further develop all points held in common.

We strongly encourage the EU and UK to develop deeper relations in security and defence. We regret the UK's decision, post-Brexit, not to enter into a formal framework together with the EU for cooperation in these critical areas and the EPP takes the view that the EU should continue to insist on creating such a formal framework. The vital collaboration between the EU and UK in support for Ukraine, alongside NATO, G7 and other allies and friends, only underscores the essential importance of this partnership.

The EPP is Europe's leading party on security and defence. The EU has the tools; we have implemented them; we have agreed on a new Strategic Compass; now we must act and put into practice EU commitments.

Combating hybrid and disinformation attacks

The EPP highlights the need to strengthen the EU's resilience vis-à-vis hybrid and disinformation attacks as well as the EU's cyber defence capacities, in order to better protect our citizens and critical infrastructure. While doing everything to stop the war itself, we strongly condemn the use of war symbols and demonstrations in support of Russia's war.

Russia's propaganda justifying the war in Ukraine must have has no place in the EU media sphere. In this regard, the EPP welcomes the EU's already-taken steps in this direction, by having sanctioned two Kremlin channels: *Russia Today* and *Sputnik* such regime-controlled outlets cannot be considered as media in normal sense, they are source of disinformation and fake news and must be curbed in the EU infosphere. At the same time, we need to provide support for high-quality and independent Russian-language journalism, thus enriching the information space. The EU must develop its toolbox for countering foreign interference and influence operations and enhance coordination between EU Member States in this field. Not only must we enhance accountability and transparency of social media platforms; we must also consider developing new tools for imposing costs on perpetrators. Relevant existing structures, specifically the EEAS Strategic Communication Taskforce, must be strengthened. We welcome the EU Hybrid Toolbox envisioned in the EU's Strategic Compass and call for its urgent creation: to streamline the Union's ability to combat hybrid threats.

The EPP calls on the EU to boost its cyber deterrence, including defensive as well as offensive capacities. The EU needs not only the means to defend its citizens and infrastructure against cyber-attacks but an ability and readiness to respond to them. This would bolster the EU's ability to deter state-sponsored cyber operations. In 2020, the EU invoked for the first time its cyber-diplomacy tools and imposed sanctions against Russian and Chinese individuals for conducting malicious cyber-attacks. The EU must stand ready to counter such malicious behaviour in cyberspace and have the mechanisms needed to prevent, deter and respond to external digital threats. The EPP calls for closer transatlantic cooperation against these challenges and for extending NATO's capabilities in defending Allies in cyberspace.

Cyberspace operations should become part of the EU's Petersburg Tasks, which describe the types of military operations the Union can conduct within the framework of the EU's Common

Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). We welcome the activation of the PESCO Cyber Rapid Response Team (CRRT) project but regret that only Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania are currently participating. We encourage other Member States and third countries, including Ukraine to join its activities.

Lastly, we need to ensure that our European societies become more resilient vis-à-vis Russian influencers aiming to divide and weaken our societies — at both the political level and in the everyday world of social media: i.e., 'in real life' as well as online.

Securing sustainable, reliable energy

The EPP remains committed to combatting climate change, per the Paris Agreement and the ambitions of the European Green Deal and by implementing the 'Fit for 55' package. We also need to reorient our energy policy in order to end our dependency on fossil-fuel imports from Russia. The challenge is significant, with Russia being by far the EU's largest supplier of oil, gas and coal. Moreover, several Member States' nuclear power plants depend on Russian-produced nuclear fuel and reactor parts. Energy policy has long constituted Russia's primary leverage in holding Europe hostage politically — this must end. The RePower EU Plan is the EU's pathway towards becoming independent from Russia's energy well before 2030. The EPP applauds the Baltic states for achieving independence from Russian energy supplies as of 1 April 2022 and welcomes other Member States' pledges to do so as soon as possible. It also welcomed the decision to freeze the Nord Stream 2 project, which should be completely abandoned.

Just as the Covid-19 pandemic showed the importance of solidarity between Member States, Europe is stronger when acting jointly against the Russian threat. The EPP welcomes the agreement to jointly buy and store gas, hydrogen and liquefied natural gas (LNG) and the establishment of the EU Energy Purchase Platform, which should evolve from the current voluntary agreement to full-scale joint purchasing: securing needed volumes, driving down prices — as was achieved with COVID-19 vaccines — and creating a true European Energy Union. Additional measures, such as high import tariffs on oil and gas, could be considered: reducing Russia's revenues while enabling the EU to help compensate households for their energy bills.

The EU must continue to coordinate with international partners in order to ensure adequate energy supply. The refilling of gas storage should start immediately and should achieve at least 80% capacity by winter 2022-2023, rising to 90% in the following years. European capitals should tightly coordinate throughout this process as there are related risks of

European members outbidding their partners and competing for gas deliveries. Taking into account the different levels of gas storage capacities among Member States, storage must be shared across the EU and cross-border solidarity arrangements be concluded as soon as possible. The EU must complete and improve gas and electricity interconnectivity, including the full synchronisation of power grids.

We must diversify our gas supply with urgent investments in new LNG terminals and other gas infrastructure, including by improving pipelines reverse gas-flow capacities. The EU must further develop upstream domestic oil and gas sectors. To ensure security of supply, the shuttering of coal plants could be halted for one year; but in view of our climate objectives, investments into new ones should be avoided. Investments in green hydrogen will further strengthen EU energy security and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Supporting research and innovation in the energy sector will be crucial for the decarbonisation of our energy-intensive industries.

We will need all available energy sources to ensure security of supply — in particular low-carbon sources, including nuclear. The EU's energy and climate change strategy will need to unbundle the shift to renewables from increasing dependence on natural gas. We must fully tap into the potential of renewable EU energy and sustainable biofuels. The EPP supports increasing the EU's 2030 renewables-share target to 45%. Priority renewable projects should be allowed fast-track permitting procedures and overall administrative burdens imposed on European companies must be avoided.

One of the most effective measures for reducing our dependence on fossil fuels is increasing energy efficiency and reducing energy consumption. Energy-efficiency measures — such as building renovation, more efficient heating and cooling systems and the deploying of smart meters — can yield major energy savings. Measures must be taken at national and EU levels to shield citizens and businesses from further energy price shocks.

Ensuring the food supply in Europe and beyond

The war has severely threatened global food security. Both Russia and Ukraine are among the world's top five exporters of important cereals and oil seeds — including wheat, barley, sunflowers and maize — as well as of nitrogenous fertilisers.

In view of the severe impacts of the war on agri-food imports, a strong, well-funded and resilient Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the fundamental tool for ensuring that European farmers can increase their productivity and safeguard the availability of quality food at

reasonable prices. Market stabilisation measures would further improve the situation. The implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy should also reflect these dynamic circumstances. In the short term, the most affected farmers — especially the producers of meat and dairy — will need immediate support given the rising prices of fertiliser, feed and energy. In the longer term, the EU must develop a comprehensive, future-oriented protein strategy and sustainable fertiliser strategy to reduce its dependence on imports. Sustainability remains a key to both medium- and long-term food security. In addition, farmers play a role in enhancing energy security by producing biomass and biogas, as well as by using sections of their cropland for wind and solar energy development. Digitalised and energy-efficient farms further reduce energy consumption.

The global dimension of the looming food crisis cannot be overstated. The already vulnerable regions in Europe's Southern Neighbourhood, in Africa and in the Middle East — heavily reliant on imports from both Russia and Ukraine — will be severely impacted. While global food, fertiliser and transport prices were spiralling even before the start of the war, these prices have already reached unaffordable and unsustainable levels for many fragile countries. The EU must work with its international partners to boost food supply and strengthen development and humanitarian aid. We need both short- and long-term actions: immediately stepping up humanitarian food assistance to ensure, for those most vulnerable, the availability of, access to and consumption of safe, nutritious food while also improving the efficiency and effectiveness of EU humanitarian food assistance and using the EU's development aid to address the underlying causes of food insecurity. In long-term it is obvious that by Ukraine's accession to the European Union the role and significance of the EU in addressing eventual global food crises will substantially increase.

Strengthening EU resilience and prosperity

The longer the war continues, the greater the economic consequences will be across the EU. The immediate impacts of rising food and energy prices are already being felt. In the coming months, this will be followed by lower economic growth, higher overall inflation and greater government borrowing. This in turn will lower living standards for European citizens and increase pressure on the sustainability of public finances in some Member States.

But we must do all we can to prevent sanctions from harming Europe itself — and European citizens — more than Russia. Loyal to our values to protect the prosperity of our citizens, we must not leave anyone behind. Doing so could endanger the stability of our democracies.

Our political family has taken strong measures to support European citizens as they face these exceptionally high costs. We introduced supportive measures to vulnerable groups, such as pensioners and low-income households, who had huge difficulties paying power and gas bills. We also pushed for extensions of heating aid, reduced VAT and energy taxes and initiated overall support to small businesses.

Only through the maintenance of a strong economy open to free and fair trade can the EU hope to support and revive Ukraine while simultaneously rebuilding Europe's security, energy and food supply networks. As we made clear in our June 2021 position paper 'For a Powerful, Targeted EU Global Trade Policy', we strongly encourage intensifying the work needed to negotiate, ratify and implement the EU's many outstanding free trade agreements (FTAs): FTAs strengthen EU resilience. The EU must continue diversifying its strategic supply chains to minimise strategic dependency on any single source.

The EPP remains committed to a social market economy where fiscal sustainability underpins a balanced approach to policy-making. The war has brought significant economic challenges and elicited many proposals for additional EU spending. Once again, just as during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the EPP which is best placed to balance these economic realities with the need for political action. A free and independent and rule-of-law based Ukraine undoubtedly also contributes to a thriving EU economy.

Becoming a stronger, more strategic, more geopolitical European Union

Putin's despicable war in Ukraine, as well as other recent international and multidimensional crises, has exposed EU vulnerability to external pressures and highlighted the need for a stronger and more ambitious, credible, strategic and unified EU on the world stage. This includes the need for greater EU capacity and autonomy in setting and pursuing the EU's own strategic objectives.

Firstly, the EU should continue defending the rules-based international order based on the principles and commitments enshrined in the Charter of the UN, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

Speaking with one voice is our strength. Hence, the EU first and foremost needs unity and stronger political will from its Member States: in jointly agreeing to, and in promoting, common EU foreign policy goals and EU security-and-defence cooperation aimed at implementing the objectives, values, principles and norms of Article 21 TEU.

To improve the EU's ability to act, we call for extending the use of QMV in the context of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the defence sector. A progressive switch to QMV for CFSP decisions not having military or defence implications — in particular, those related to human rights, such as GHRSR sanctions (EU Magnitsky Act) — will enhance solidarity and mutual assistance in case of crisis. To strengthen effectiveness of sanctions' regime, the EU should consider institutionalised centralisation of preparation of individual sanctions, which are now prepared by individual Member States, as well as ensuring a level of automaticity of including perpetrators of gross human rights violations in the sanctions lists. The EPP also calls all our partners, friends and EU candidate countries to align with the EU's CFSP and assist in the full implementation of EU sanctions.

The EU's policies towards its neighbouring countries, especially towards those aspiring to join the EU family, should be transparent, coherent, merit based and clear. Alongside Ukraine, the EU must grant EU candidate status to the Republic of Moldova. In addition to this, the EU should increase its technical assistance to ensure that the Republic of Moldova's ambitious reform agenda receives adequate European support. In particular, Russia's war in Ukraine has struck a sobering chord with many in the Western Balkans, reminding them of the horror of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. This new situation demands the closest cooperation and solidarity within the EPP family. It is a wake-up call for the EU as regards the additional efforts needed and the principle of fairness long due for the Western Balkans' EU integration. Without prejudice to the integration standards imposed by the European Union on all candidate countries, it should serve as a catalyst for the ultimate unification of Europe — a more strategic and more urgent geopolitical necessity now given the spill over threat of insecurity to the entire region.

Geopolitically, Putin's war has only underscored the vital importance of the EU's essential partnerships, starting with the transatlantic alliance. The EU-US partnership has been built over many decades on the basis of core democratic values. As we underscored in our February 2021 position paper 'Reinvigorating the Transatlantic Partnership', it remains indispensable to European security, global prosperity and international order. We welcome the renewal of that partnership since the arrival of the new US administration, as shown by concrete progress in solving long-standing trade irritants and closer cooperation in addressing critical common challenges, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nowhere has renewed transatlantic partnership been more in evidence than in supporting Ukraine — politically, financially, militarily and via humanitarian aid — and by imposing costs on Putin's regime following its latest invasion. We welcome President Biden's participation in Brussels in the EU and NATO summits in June 2021 and March 2022, as well as the many other

ongoing fora for high-level transatlantic collaboration, and we urge the regularisation of such dialogue. We must build on recent momentum. In standing together with Ukraine, we similarly welcome the major contributions of our other traditional Western partners, in particular Canada, the United Kingdom and other NATO allies. We acknowledge, too, the vital part being played by Norway, Switzerland, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and others. We call on all democracies and all supporters of freedom and peace around the world — in Latin America, Africa and Asia — to stand up in international bodies in condemnation of Putin's war of aggression and war crimes and to demand respect for Ukrainian sovereignty.

Regarding India, in particular, the world's largest democracy and a strategic EU partner, the EU should build on current efforts to actively deepen engagement: to ensure India sees alongside the EU and fellow democracies — and in a democracy-led international order — a path far preferable to anything Russia or China can offer. Given the gruesome reality, and the stakes, of the war in Ukraine, there should be no place for abstention.

The EU and China must work together on stopping Russia's war in Ukraine as soon as possible. We call on China to support efforts for a lasting ceasefire and to address the dramatic humanitarian crisis. China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has a special responsibility. China cannot stay blind to Russia's violation of the international law. China's course in this crisis will impact the future of EU-China relations.

We remain committed to dialogue and to working with China as an essential global partner on the basis of reciprocity and mutual respect, but also to countering its influence where it weakens democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

Finally, vis-à-vis Russia itself: we must acknowledge that the threat fully realised in Putin's most recent invasion has often been overlooked, relegated and underestimated. Put simply, and to reiterate our position as expressed in our June 2021 paper on EU-Russia relations 'From a Strategic Partner to a Strategic Challenge?': Europe will not be safe and peaceful unless and until the authoritarian, kleptocratic regime in Russia is transformed and becomes democratic. We have followed with the utmost concern the unjust incarceration of Alexei Navalny. We want to see a Russia where all political prisoners are released and no longer persecuted; where basic freedoms of speech, religion, media, assembly and organisation are established and guaranteed; and where rule of law and respect for international order form the basis of a transparent political system and a vibrant, competitive economy. Russia must demonstrate a clear break from the Putin regime and its totalitarian legacy. Russia must respect the sovereignty and restore the territorial integrity of other nations, including Ukraine, Moldova

and Georgia, as well as refrain from further aggressive policies towards its neighbours and the EU can help the Russian people in that, by demonstrating clearly and already in the course of this war, that a new page of EU-Russia relations can be opened once Russia chooses pro-European democratic way of development. To this end the EU strategy for future relations with a democratic Russia must be developed, showing the benefits of such relations in order for the Russian people to have conditions for a normal European type of life, when Russia will transform itself into a European type democracy. Such kind of transformation would allow for the EU and democratic Russia to develop a relationship which is not now available, such as free trade and visa-free travel.

Conclusion

Russia's war in Ukraine is a threat to our Western democracies; to our 'security, prosperity and values; and to the rules-based international order itself. As the war on European territory continues, the EU faces a pivotal moment: will we finally make the vital political decisions needed to fortify our defence-and-security architecture, strengthen our foreign policy, put a stop to the fossil fuel imports which finance Putin's regime and truly become a capable, resilient, strategically independent forward-looking, competitive' and sustainably prosperous EU.

Many EU Member States will have to initiate far-reaching national reforms in the area of defence — some may even need to change their constitutions — and yet these steps are a matter of vital political importance requiring political decisiveness and courage.

The EU must invest in its strategic sovereignty, its ability to act and its resilience; and we must stand by and support those countries aspiring to join the European Union and ready to fully meet its high integration standards as together we build a democratic European future.

If the EU and its Member States want to effectively deter authoritarian powers encroaching on our democracies — and to defend peace and democratic values together with our partners and allies — now is the time for firm and brave action.