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## Appeal to Europe for the situation in Ukraine

The Presidency of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences, giving voice to the Bishops of the European Continent in this dramatic moment of tension around Ukraine, wishes to express its closeness to the Churches in Ukraine and to all its people. They invite the international community to offer its support to the country in the face of the danger of a Russian military offensive.

While the entire international community interprets the actions of the Russian military forces as a real threat to peace throughout the world, we embrace - in this time of fear and uncertainty for the future of the country - our brothers and sisters in the faith and all the people of Ukraine.

We have heard the voice of the Holy Father Francis, who has repeatedly expressed his paternal closeness to the "beloved Ukraine", urging the powerful in the world to resolve the crisis through "serious dialogue and not with arms" (*Angelus of 12.12.2021*). Moreover, in his recent Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, he stressed that "Reciprocal trust and readiness to engage in calm discussion should also inspire all parties at stake, so that acceptable and lasting solutions can be found in Ukraine..." (*Audience with the Diplomatic Corps on 10.01.2022*).

We also, as shepherds of the European Continent, want to appeal to the Leaders of the Nations so that they do not forget the tragic World Wars of the last century and so that international law as well as the independence and territorial sovereignty of each country will be defended. Together with the Holy Father, we want to call on Governments to find "acceptable and lasting solutions" in Ukraine based on dialogue and negotiation and without resorting to arms.

At this extremely delicate time, we ask Christians to pray for the gift of peace in Ukraine so that those responsible may be filled with, and radiate, a peace that is "contagious" and that the crisis will be overcome exclusively through dialogue.

H.E. Msgr. Gintaras Grušas

*Archbishop of Vilnius and CCEE President*