



Commission of the Bishops' Conferences
of the European Union

To His Holiness Kirill
Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia
Russian Orthodox Church

Brussels, 8 March 2022

Your Holiness,

It is with deep sorrow in my heart that I am addressing you today as President of the Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) and as a brother faithful in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

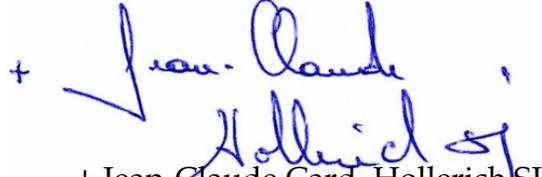
Broken-hearted, we listen to the voices of our brothers and sisters who are suffering from the foolishness of war in Ukraine, whose horrific consequences are in front of our eyes. Thousands – soldiers and civilians alike – have already lost their lives and more than a million people have been displaced or fled their homeland, most of them vulnerable women and children. As violent attacks are hitting Ukraine and its people every day with greater force, the need for humanitarian assistance is growing dramatically by the hour, while diplomatic efforts have remained fruitless so far. Moreover, as words and actions keep escalating, the possibility of a wider European or even global conflict with catastrophic consequences cannot be excluded.

In these dark moments for humanity, accompanied by intense feelings of hopelessness and fear, many look to you, Your Holiness, as someone who could bring a sign of hope for a peaceful solution to this conflict. In 2016, you jointly deplored with His Holiness Pope Francis *“the hostility in Ukraine that has already caused many victims, inflicted innumerable wounds on peaceful inhabitants and thrown society into a deep economic and humanitarian crisis”*, urging for action aimed at constructing peace and social solidarity.

Please do not let those powerful words go in vain. Sharing Pope Francis' feelings of anguish and concern repeatedly expressed over the *“rivers of blood and tears flowing in Ukraine”*, I dare to implore your Holiness in the spirit of fraternity: please, address an urgent appeal to Russian authorities to immediately stop the hostilities against the Ukrainian people and to show goodwill for seeking a diplomatic solution to the conflict, based on dialogue, common sense and respect for international law, while allowing safe humanitarian corridors and unrestricted access to humanitarian assistance.

As Your Holiness stressed during your recent meeting with the Apostolic Nuncio to the Russian Federation, “*the Church can be a peacemaking force*”. In this time of Lent, let us as Christians, proclaiming the same Gospel and praying to the same God, who is the God of peace and not of war, pray and do our utmost to help end this senseless war so that reconciliation and peace may dwell again on the European continent.

Respectfully yours in Our Lord Jesus Christ,

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+ Jean-Claude Card. Hollerich SJ
Archbishop of Luxembourg
President of COMECE