

Statement by the Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz, on the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine

We, at the Leibniz Institute of European History, are dismayed by the news reaching us from Ukraine. In the last few years alone, ten Ukrainian historians have been guests at our Institute for extended research stays. Today we have to fear for their lives and those of their families and friends. Our thoughts are with them. We are with you! Ми з вами!

We strongly condemn Vladimir Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine, which is contrary to international law. Our Institute was founded more than 70 years ago to contribute to overcoming Europe's divisions by researching the historical foundations of Europe. During the Cold War, it was, among other things, the venue of the "German-Soviet Historians' Talks". Today it pains us to see that a brutal war is being waged in the heart of Europe. The painstakingly achieved foundations of a peaceful, future-oriented order in Europe are being trampled on by Putin - not for the first time. It is therefore all the more admirable that courageous people in Russia are also taking to the streets and saying "No to war". Нет войне!

Ukraine is a fundamental part of European history. In historiography, it is undisputed that Ukraine is a sovereign European country with its own history and not merely an appendage of the historical or a future Russian empire. As historians, we are particularly appalled by the instrumentalisation and falsification of history that Putin uses to justify his military aggression against Ukraine. The community of scholars, including the German-Ukrainian Commission of Historians, has rejected these false claims in detail [[Statement 2022-02-24](#) and [Statement 2022-02-22](#)]. We add that it is not a contradiction that Ukraine is both closely intertwined with Russian history, its various cultural manifestations and religions and in historical exchange with Central and Western Europe, not least with Germany. Ukraine is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse country, with different denominations, religions, and languages, as well as a rich historical heritage. The diversity in European history is part of our research mission. Hardly any other country illustrates the diversity and mutual exchanges in Europe as clearly as Ukraine.

This European history of Ukraine must also be researched in the future without political interventions and restrictions. That is why we support initiatives for endangered researchers from Ukraine, to enable them to work in a safe place and to make their voices heard. We are with you! Ми з вами!

Mainz, 26 February 2022

Contact: Professor Johannes Paulmann (paulmann@ieg-mainz.de) and Dr Gregor Feindt (feindt@ieg-mainz.de)

