An open letter to the leaders of the West and international organisations

We, public policy experts, officials and the broader international community around GLOBSEC would like to express our outrage over the escalating situation in Ukraine and Russian efforts to undermine the security system in Europe.

Russia’s ongoing deplorable act of military incursion into a sovereign territory of Ukraine follows a series of earlier acts of aggressions: the 2008 invasion of Georgia, the 2014 annexation of Crimea and other destabilizing efforts in Europe, including election interference and an all-out information war against democratic societies. This is a frontal assault on the basic principles of the European security order and on the Europe whole, free and at peace that replaced the Cold War order a generation ago. It is based on international agreements (signed by Russia and the USSR), such as the Helsinki Final Act (1975), the Paris Charter (1990), the Budapest Memorandum (1994) and the NATO-Russia Founding Act (1997).

Russia’s baseless and truly shocking aggression sets a dangerous precedent whereby territorial conflicts are designed, orchestrated and resolved by the use of brute force leading to potential outbreaks of war in many parts of the globe. Russian recent actions are not limited to Ukraine: the steady and significant build-up of forces in Belarus, the escalation of disinformation efforts in Europe as well as repeated violations of territorial waters and airspace of Sweden and the Baltic states by Russian military units point clearly to a wider effort by Russia to challenge the security architecture in Europe. Russia’s current aggressive actions will lead to another protracted long-term conflict, casting a shadow on the security architecture in Europe.

- We emphasise the right to self-determination of Ukraine. President Putin’s demand for a “sphere of influence” is antiquated and an unacceptable remnant of the 20th century that resulted in two world wars.
- We strongly condemn Russia’s unprovoked aggression against Ukraine and will insist upon a firm and principled response by Western governments and international organisations.
- We believe that the values of the Western world – of liberal democracy and open society – are now being put to the test. How this test is passed will determine not only the future of NATO, the EU, and liberal democracy but the international rules-based order itself.
- We recognize the need for the transatlantic relationship to be reinforced as the backbone of Europe’s security; within this alliance, Europe must shoulder more of the burden.
Therefore, in order to preserve peace and prevent further escalation on the part of Russia, we call to action the governments of NATO and EU member states:

To show a united and principled stance towards Russia by foregoing all direct business or commercial interests of cooperation with Russia, including in the energy sector.

To make clear to Russian leaders the consequences of its actions, including a full range of sanctions targeting the Russian political leadership, crippling its economy and severing its ties with the West.

To launch a robust resilience plan for Ukraine that will equip the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian society with the necessary financial and material resources to defend the country, sustain public services and critical infrastructure including energy and cyber; and protect the most vulnerable segments of its population.

To prepare continued and multi-faceted long-term support to the Ukrainian society, disbursing funds, allocating personnel and adequate financial resources.

To conduct a constant stock-taking exercise on how Ukraine can be further assisted in the framework of multilateral organisations.

To intensify efforts at diversification of energy sources, including initiatives under the auspices of the EU such as the “gas union”.

To launch a series of escalatory sanctions designed to make Russia withdraw its forces from the territories it has seized from Ukraine.

Additionally, we call on NATO:

To collaborate with the EU to design and implement a comprehensive strategy to reinforce the resilience of Central and Eastern Europe to Russian aggression, both militarily and economically.

To further reinforce NATO’s eastern frontiers from the Baltic to the Black Sea.
Initial signatories:

Ian Anthony | Director, European Security Programme, SIPRI, Sweden
Gordon Bajnai | Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, GLOBSEC; former Prime Minister of Hungary
Rosa Balfour | Director, Carnegie Europe, Belgium
Jozef Bátora | Professor, Department of Political Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia
Martin Bútora | Honorary President, Institute for Public Affairs; former Ambassador of Slovakia to the United States of America
Jenna Ben-Yehuda | President and Chief Executive Officer, Truman National Security Project and Truman Center for National Policy, United States of America
Carl Bildt | Former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden
Philip Blond | Director, ResPublica, United Kingdom
Ian Brzezinski | Resident Senior Fellow, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, The Atlantic Council, United States of America
Pavol Demeš | Senior Transatlantic Fellow, German Marshall Fund of the United States; former Minister of International Relations of the Slovak Republic
Mikuláš Dzurinda | President, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies; former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic
Melissa Hathaway | President, Hathaway Global Strategies, LLC, United States of America
Toomas Hendrik Ilves | Former President of the Republic of Estonia
Milan Ježovica | Senior Fellow, MESA10; former State Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic
Rastislav Káčer | Former Ambassador to the United States of America and former State Secretary of Defence of the Slovak Republic
Ivan Krastev | Member of the Board of Directors, GLOBSEC; Chairman, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Bulgaria Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute; former Minister for Europe of Portugal
Bruno Mačiáš | Fellow, Hudson Institute; former Minister for Europe of Portugal
Ivan Mikloš | Distinguished Associate Fellow, Economic Growth & Sustainability Programme, GLOBSEC; former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the Slovak Republic
Wilhelm Molterer | Chairman of the Board of Directors, GLOBSEC; former Vice Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Austria
Richard-Ivan Ogilchyn | Founding Partner and CEO, Octagonal Corporation, United States of America
Sally Painter | Chief Operating Officer, Blue Star Strategies, United States of America
Petr Pavel | Retired General, former Chairman of the NATO Military Committee; former Chief of Staff of the Czech Armed Forces, Czechia
Rosen Plevneliev | President of the Republic of Bulgaria 2012 – 2017
Charles Powell | Director, Elcano Royal Institute, Spain
Peter Van Praag | Founder and President of Halifax International Security Forum, United States of America
Petr Pudil | Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, GLOBSEC; Co-founder, BPD partners, Czechia
Jana Puglierin | Head of ECFR Berlin, European Council on Foreign Relations, Germany
Philip Reitinger | Former Deputy Under Secretary of the National Protection and Programs Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Anton Rop | former Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia
Mariëtje Schaake | International Policy Director, Cyber Policy Center, Stanford University, United States of America Adjunct
James Townsend | Senior Fellow, Transatlantic Security Program, Centre for New American Security, Unites States of America
Andreas Treichl | Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Erste Foundation and President of the European Forum Alpbach, Austria
Zoltán Varga | Chairman of the Board, Central Médiasport, Hungaray
Röbert Vass | President, GLOBSEC, Slovakia
Alexander Vershbow | Distinguished Fellow, Transatlantic Security Initiative, The Atlantic Council, United States of America Former U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine, United States of America
Kurt Volker | Former President of the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) of the EU; former President of the Eurogroup Working Group, Austria
Thomas Wieser | Director, Northern Europe, Atlantic Council, Sweden
Anna Wieslander | President and CEO, National Endowment for Democracy, United States of America
Damon Wilson | President of the Polish Confederation Lewiatan, Poland
Maciej Witucki

About GLOBSEC:
GLOBSEC is an independent think-tank based in Bratislava, Slovakia and with offices in Brussels and Vienna. GLOBSEC acts in the spirit of European values and supports transatlantic cooperation. Our mission is to ensure a secure, democratic Europe and preserve a safe and sustainable social future.

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