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Dear member of the Swiss Parliament!

We are representatives of Ukrainian diaspora organisations as well as Swiss citizens, who are very concerned about the pain and death the Russian aggression against Ukraine causes.

We appreciate the stand and vote of Switzerland at the UN General assembly on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014, when there was the debate about the territorial integrity of Ukraine. We are also grateful that Switzerland is currently engaged economically as well as with humanitarian aid in Ukraine.

But we are disappointed that some – in our view - irresponsible actions of Swiss politicians suggest, that there is ambivalence in the official Swiss policy towards Russia, when it comes to taking a firm stand to convince Russia to honour international law as well as pull back its irregular troops and weapons from Ukraine and give back illegally seized territory.

On June 18<sup>th</sup> we were very surprised to learn about the visit of a delegation of the Russian Federation Council to the Swiss Parliament. The leading members of the delegation - the Vice-speaker, Juri Worobew, and the Head of international relations, Wladimir Dschabarow - had been put on the EU sanctions list (hereby facing a travel ban to the Schengen countries) because of their active role in the organisation and support of the Russian war against Ukraine. The price Ukraine has so far paid for the Russian aggression is more than 6000 dead Ukrainians, 12'000 wounded and more than a million refugees (internally displaced persons).

With the official reception of these two men in the – applauding - Swiss Parliament, Putin's propaganda department was allowed to demonstrate the perceived international acceptance of Russia and hereby run a convincing story to the Russian audience, that only the US and a handful of its lackeys oppose Russia, while some reputable countries like Switzerland welcome Russia and have no problem with Russia's ambitions and its policies. This gives Putin and his generals a solid base for continuing their aggression against Ukraine, but also to restart the race of arms as well as set up more nuclear weapons directed to Europe – an imminent threat also for Switzerland.

Many Swiss can well remember the times, when the world lived under the constant threat of a nuclear war. The many shelters in Swiss houses tell a vivid story of these times. Ukraine has substantially contributed to international peace and stability when foregoing the world's third largest nuclear weapons arsenal by signing the Budapest Memorandum in 1994. Russia, the UK, the US, France and China promised in return to warrant Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity – a warranty that has become a farce in the light of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The more important it is today that Ukraine gets support from Switzerland and other countries with a will to help, in order to re-establish as fast as possible peaceful life in all illegally seized territories and to force the aggressor to withdraw from Ukrainian territory.

We regret that there are Swiss politicians arguing for equidistance in the light of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Experience from history should have taught the world and in particular

Europe to which catastrophic situations it can lead, when one tries to appease and hereby tolerate an aggressor with criminal ambitions.

We call on the Swiss Parliament - rather than playing into the hands of Putin's propaganda - to seek a closer cooperation with the Ukrainian Parliament.

There is a parliamentary group "Swiss Ukraine"; it is hard to understand given the situation, but it seems dormant since 2012. Isn't it highly questionable that Member of Parliament Filippo Lombardi, who invited the Russian delegation despite all sanctions, is co-president of that abovementioned parliamentary group? It would be desirable, that under the circumstances this group should be restructured to intensify the cooperation with Ukraine.

As information is key, there is a good example how to get more in depth knowledge – however from abroad: On June 10<sup>th</sup>, a part of the German Parliament (CDU/CSU) organised a congress "Russia and Ukraine – historical background of a European conflict". In the press there were many comments praising this congress as a good base for a better understanding of the complex situation in Ukraine. We would welcome such an effort by the Swiss Parliament (or parts thereof) and offer – if required – our help for setting it up.

We appeal to the Swiss Parliament and all Swiss politicians to help Ukraine and to force Russia to respect international law and in particular the sovereignty of the young Ukrainian state. We also ask to refrain from inviting Russian officials on the sanctions list/under travel ban to Switzerland and to reduce cooperation with Russia in the spirit of the international sanctions.

Sincerely

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