

## **CNB Statement on the situation in Ukraine**

**2 March 2022**

The French National Bar Council (CNB) joins the Council of European Bars and Law Societies (CCBE) and all European and International bodies representing the legal profession in denouncing in the strongest possible terms the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and expressing its full solidarity with the lawyers and more generally with the population living in Ukraine.

The entire European and international legal community recalls that States must respect the obligations, values, freedoms and fundamental principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, the Statute of the Council of Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights and all the general principles of public international law and international humanitarian law.

The opening of an investigation by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court into crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed on Ukrainian territory is a strong signal in favor of the rule of law.

Furthermore, the CNB welcomes the courageous position of Russian lawyers who have spoken out in favor of respect for the rule of law and the cessation of hostilities.

It demonstrates the unwavering commitment of our profession to its essential values, despite the risks that such positions imply for the defenders of rights.

Finally, the CNB strongly recalls that the right to leave a conflict zone as well as the right to asylum must be respected for all persons, regardless of their real or assumed nationality.

For this reason, it welcomes the decision of the European Commission asking the Member States of the European Union to activate the provisions of Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons, which provides in particular for the immediate granting of temporary protection, for a maximum period of three years, to any displaced person, the right to work, the right to education, housing and health care. The CNB calls for the full and effective implementation of this directive.

It is indeed extremely urgent that an operational mechanism be put in place within the European Union to allow the evacuation and reception of displaced persons but also of lawyers and human rights defenders who are particularly exposed to reprisals.



It is lawyers and human rights defenders who have promoted the values of democracy and the rule of law, with which we identify. It is in this capacity that they are now threatened.

The CNB has contacted the Ukrainian Bar Association and the Bars of neighboring countries to offer its full support and assistance to the displaced populations and the lawyers who are helping them.