



CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN CANADA

## **CEEC Calls on Canadian Government to Immediately Deliver Defensive Weapons to Ukraine**

January 22, 2021

TORONTO- The Central and Eastern European Council in Canada (CEEC) is deeply concerned about the growing threat of Russian military invasion of Ukraine and strongly urges the Canadian government to help deter Russian violence by immediately delivering defensive weapons to support the defence of Ukrainian sovereignty.

Russian military offensives around the world over the past decade have demonstrated a complete absence of concern for civilians and often feature mass human rights abuses. Should Russia invade Ukraine, the CEEC believes that the casualties inflicted on the Ukrainian people by Russia's leaders will be catastrophic. Although Canada must be prepared to support a massive wave of refugees fleeing a Russian invasion, the government of Canada must act now to do all that it can to prevent such a situation.

While the supply of non-lethal weapons is welcome, the defence of Ukraine requires weapons that can stop Russian bombers and attack helicopters from terrorizing Ukrainian civilians and stopping armored weaponry that are capable of laying waste to urban centers. Canada should immediately follow the lead of the United Kingdom and United States, by delivering surface-to-air and anti-armor weapons systems to Ukraine.

Canada should also take leadership in the application of deterrent sanctions. This includes sanctioning associates of Vladimir Putin and his kleptocratic government who are already sanctioned by our allies but are absent from Canada's Magnitsky sanctions list. Canada must immediately target the Russian oligarchs who directly enable Vladimir Putin and keep their significant wealth in Canada. Targeting Putin's own wealth and those who support him will provoke an immediate change in the Kremlin's calculus for war.

Finally, the Canadian government must immediately create a task force to defend the Canadian information environment and our democracy against Russian and other foreign influence and disinformation. Over the past weeks and years, Russian state media and its proxies in Canada have waged a targeted campaign against the Central and Eastern European communities in Canada with hateful narratives that are intended to deny their histories and discredit them in order to silence their voices. We urge the Canadian government to take immediate action to address the growing threat of Kremlin information warfare against Canada.

The CEEC represents the interests of 4.5 million Canadians of Central and Eastern European Heritage.

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