

DECLARATION OF THE EUROPEAN AND IBERO-AMERICAN ACADEMY OF YUSTE ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE

More than 65 years have passed since six European countries set out on the road to the integration of their economies and societies in 1957 in the hope of bequeathing a better life to all their citizens. They did so on the smoky ground of a continent that was ravaged by the material and moral devastation caused by a terrifying European war that involved the whole world and by the experience of brutal totalitarian and genocidal political regimes that used the most extreme violence against their own and neighbouring populations. That integrative project that tried to overcome centuries of confrontation and internal divisions immediately demonstrated its potential and soon motivated the incorporation desire of the rest of continental countries to the process. As a result, throughout successive enlargements, today 27 states constitute the European Union, an unprecedented political experiment of integration and socio-economic cooperation superior to the idea of confederation without becoming a complete federation.

This Europeanist project, in these six and a half decades of existence, has been able to generate the greatest phase of political stability, economic prosperity, cultural flourishing and social welfare recorded in the old continent throughout its millenary and dense history. And, undoubtedly, in that long road, the past and subsequent generations who carried out such work operated under the immediate weight of the tragic memory of the recent belligerent past that had to be left behind forever and under the stimulus of the hope of a more human and fortunate future for all its heirs. They acted, to put it in the classical way, with a combination of moral passion and pragmatic reason: *sine ira et studio* (without sentimental sectarianism and after rational reflection).

However, for almost a whole year now, to the surprise and profound regret of European citizens, the spectre of the horror of war that was thought to have been

conjured up has returned to the old continental plot in the most brutal and painful way. This time in the form of Russia's unjustified military aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in the wake of untold suffering among the civilian population of that country, forced to endure the destruction of its social, economic and cultural fabric, as well as pushed to forced emigration from their ancestral homes to try to survive. This unexpected return of a feared rider of the Apocalypse to the gates of its frontiers has overwhelmed the spirits of all Europeans, because it makes one rekindle and contemplate the brutality of a well-known human phenomenon, but one that is highly abhorred from the very origins of the European civilisation in the oldest mists of the ancient classical era. Not in vain, one of his earliest historical descriptions and moral condemnations was made by Herodotus of Halicarnassus, the father of History as an intellectual discipline, back in the 5th century BC: "After all, no one is stupid enough to prefer war to peace; in peace sons bury their fathers and in war fathers bury their sons".


In all its poignant simplicity, this damning definition of one of our first and greatest European thinkers alludes unreservedly to a well-known and verifiable trait: war, as a prolonged violent conflict between well-defined armed groups, radically alters the parameters of the social life of human collectives who are unlucky and have the misfortune to experience and endure it. And it also achieves the absurdity that natural and predictable biological rhythms break to the point that parents bury their children before they can fulfil their moral obligation to bury their parents with due respect and in due time.

Under these tragic circumstances for all peace-loving European citizens, the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste wishes to add its voice to the call against war that was adopted a few months ago by the International Union of Academies, which was founded in 1919 in the wake of the cataclysm of World War I as

an organisation promoting cooperation in human and social sciences in more than a hundred academies and higher research centres in 63 different countries, including Ukraine and Russia. In the same vein, the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste expresses its sincere and profound solidarity with the people of Ukraine, which has been ravaged by unjustified and condemnable military aggression by a neighbouring nation that has been culturally and spiritually linked to it for centuries. And, like the International Union of Academies and many other fraternal academic organisations, the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste subscribes to the hope that it will be possible to reach a rapid end to hostilities thanks to the efforts of the United Nations Organization and the European Union to restore the rule of international law and put an end to so much unnecessary and undeserved human suffering.

At the Monastery of Yuste, headquarters of the Academy, February 2023.

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