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**The Russian Attack on Ukraine makes it clear:
Europe must finally wake up from its Slumber!
How We can create Peace and Prosperity for All.**

Joint statement by the European Taxpayers' Association (TAE), the European Economic Senate (ESS) and SME Europe

We, the signatories to this paper, in everyday life see about how we can create optimal framework conditions for growth and prosperity for future and subsequent generations, and that the state keeps the burdens on the citizens tolerable and also handles our tax money carefully.

Peace is not explicitly mentioned in our statutes. Not because we consider peace unimportant, but on the contrary, because peace is the fundamental, indispensable and therefore self-evident prerequisite. Just as market economy, democracy and the rule of law should actually be self-evident.

We all have and have maintained good relations with the states of Eastern Europe, including Ukraine and Russia, for decades.

So far, we have been of the opinion that our European system of values serves as a model, is accepted by our partners, and that cross-border trade and participation in growth and prosperity are, so to speak, the "glue" for stable conditions. In this respect, we have always understood the need to expand and maintain economic relations with Russia. For many years it was running like clockwork. The fact that our policy has made us dependent on Russian energy supplies and thus open to blackmail is made clear to us now that Putin's troops have "officially" invaded Ukraine.

Unfortunately, we have shown understanding and tolerance for Putin's politics for far too long and played things down. For the sake of "good" relationships and in the interests of our economy, we ultimately looked the other way. These include the annexation of Crimea, fueling the war in Donbas, military support for the Syrian dictator Assad and his brutal crackdown on members of the opposition. Putin doesn't even seem to shy away from murder, election fraud and cyber-attacks.

It is now high time for the EU and the entire western world to "wake up from its slumber" and fly the flag for freedom and our value system!

Putin's demands and threats to the western world, especially Finland and Sweden, should, now that Ukraine has been invaded, set alarm bells ringing for every reasonably educated person! Even if he doesn't say it openly, this person will not shy away from using nuclear weapons. Or how are we to understand his threat of interference with "consequences you have never experienced before"?

But what does Putin really want? It's not just about Ukraine for him. He calls for a return to the pre-1997 situation, in other words a de facto NATO withdrawal from all eastern EU countries.

If we don't stop him now and set clear boundaries, including accepting economic losses, if necessary, he won't rest until he has achieved its goals!

The Chinese are now watching very closely what is happening in Europe. If we allow Putin to take over Ukraine and nothing happens apart from a few mini-sanctions that Putin had long taken into account, what's to stop China from invading Taiwan and then taking the islands off Japan?

So, it's about much more than just Ukraine! Normal sanctions are therefore not sufficient. We must react immediately with all possible measures and stop discussing the economic consequences of sanctions! We don't have time for that anymore! Even if Putin withdraws from Ukraine, there must be no return to previous normality!

What should be done now:

Immediate measures

- Securing of the eastern EU and NATO borders
- Cancel all flights to/from Russia, block EU airspace for Russian aircraft
- Stop all trade with Russia and at the same time set up aid for affected European companies, including aid funds, special write-offs and tax breaks, loss carrybacks, etc.
- Put more Pro-Putin-Russians on the "black list" and brand them, e.g. put them on a website with a picture, and block their accounts worldwide, including in Switzerland and Dubai...
- Call on all Russian oligarchs in and outside of Russia to speak out clearly against Putin's policies; freeze their accounts so that they cannot support Putin financially
- exclude Russia from SWIFT
- Deprive Russia of the right to vote in all bodies
- Organize broad humanitarian aid
- Arms deliveries to Ukraine, or at least allow them
- Sue Putin in The Hague

In the medium term, but to be immediately decide upon

- Set up a self-sufficient, independent European energy supply and energy security, which includes the development and expansion of renewable energies and the formation of reserves, but also the construction and expansion of nuclear power plants. Ideologies have no place here anymore!

- At national and European level, "investment acceleration laws" for the implementation of necessary infrastructure measures
- Free trade agreements with the USA, Canada and Turkey as well as other countries, also with Ukraine independent of Russia
- Strengthen the EU and Europe as a production location! Create incentives for the local production of essential goods, e.g. hubs or tax-free areas
- Establish a common EU defense policy to secure the external borders, e.g. by expanding and better equipping Frontex, setting standards, operational plans, etc., permanently at least 5,000 operational personnel, in 24 hours, expandable to 20,000
- Binding national reserve formation to supply people in the EU, reserves to last for at least 14 days
- A common development policy for B(R)ICS states and emerging countries
- Open-outcome funding for R&D in the field of climate protection, including, for example, synthetic fuels and a further development of engines and engine systems
- A joint strategy for climate and environmental protection in B(R)ICS states
- Promotion of independent democracy movements and independent media
- A clear commitment and a zero-tolerance policy towards human rights violations, including the protection of religious communities
- Development of common and clear sanctions mechanisms (sanctions roadmap)
- Economic "Marshall Plan" and reconstruction of an independent Ukraine; this also includes intensified cooperation with the EU and a free trade agreement
- Economic "Marshall Plan" and resumption of economic relations with Russia as soon as it commits itself to international law and the rule of law. Russia must become independent of oil and gas exports in the medium and long term, because sooner or later there will be hardly any demand or buyers for fossil energy in the West. Otherwise, Russia will only be able to expand energy exports to China. This would only strengthen the economic status quo and prevent growth potential from being leveraged.

Freedom doesn't come free! If we want to secure peace, freedom and prosperity in our own interests and in the interests of future generations, we must be willing to spend money and stand up for our common values! This also includes clearly showing that we are always ready and able to defend ourselves, and that Europe cannot simply be attacked!

At the same time, if Russia withdraws from Ukraine and commits to complying with international law, i.e. recognizing the independence and autonomy of Ukraine and all other states, one has to shake hands with Russia again and support the country's economic development. Because a stable and economically strong Russia, where there is growth and prosperity thanks to trade with the EU and the West, is desirable and beneficial for everyone!

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