

PERC PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COUNCIL CRE CONSEIL REGIONAL EUROPEEN  
ВЕРС ВСЕЕВРОПЕЙСКИЙ РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫЙ СОВЕТ

**Pan European Regional Council  
Statement on the situation and the way out of the crisis in Ukraine**

1. Trade unions in Europe have been following with growing concern the unfolding events in Ukraine whose repercussions, in addition to those affecting the Ukrainian people, have wide-ranging geopolitical consequences. The pictures from landmark Maidan square and the streets of Kiev have manifested the power of the eruption of the free will of the people demanding dignity, democratic rights and a future of their own choice. They have demonstrated a remarkable resilience in facing an oligarchic system of state governance based on corruption and abuse of power that did not hesitate to respond with blatant disrespect of human rights and reckless use of force, violence and firearms. The dire outcome has been the loss of scores of human lives, hundreds more injured, a devastation of public property and the plunging the economy and society into a whirlpool of instability, internal conflicts, security and national integrity challenges involving powerful external interests. Unfortunately, some violent fascist and neo-nazi groups, which we totally oppose, have sought to capture this peaceful political revolution for their own ends.
2. The citizens and working people in particular have paid and are paying the price for years of irresponsible policy-making, unaccountable management of the economy and systematic disregard of the rights and freedoms of the people on a massive scale.
3. The way out of the crisis will require herculean efforts of the people of Ukraine. Success will necessitate motivation, national mobilisation and stable public consensus to go through the difficult times ahead. Economic and social achievements of the Ukrainian people were already under pressure and the forthcoming adjustment policies can put them in further jeopardy and undermine the very basis of the needed national consensus. External support, including financial, should provide the necessary incentives to encourage transparency and inclusion of the stakeholders and democratic ownership in all stages of the stabilisation and recovery process. The European Union must play its full role in this process.
4. To face the real challenges and secure a peaceful, efficient and socially acceptable way out from the crisis, the organisations members of the Pan European Regional Council outline a minimum set of urgent measures to be undertaken as soon as possible:
  - There is no solution possible without peace. De-escalation of tensions, more diplomatic efforts and respect for the Ukrainian Constitution and the interests of all sides, including territorial integrity and the withdrawal of all armed forces, are the only way for a peaceful solution. All internal and external actors should exercise maximum responsibility in their speech and restrain their actions within the norms of international law and constitutional principles and open space for the Ukrainian people to freely define their future.
  - Efforts to shift to a genuine democratic political system and working public institutions should continue through free and fair elections and constitutional reform that will provide real equality of rights and inclusion of all citizens, with full respect for all minorities (cultural, linguistic, religious) in all regions of Ukraine.

Acts of violence and illegal appropriation of public money or abuse of public office should be investigated, given a fair trial and perpetrators brought to justice.

- The EU and the international financial institutions should shape assistance packages so as to integrate an efficient social dimension including trade union and workers' rights in the reforms, preventing a further degradation of working and living conditions in the adjustment period. European trade unions strongly underline that resorting to the "austerity policy" approach, as practiced by the "troika" of the IMF, EU and ECB, will be a grave mistake, endangering Ukraine with further recession, destabilisation, and social despair that will have consequences across the region, both West and East.
  - Social dialogue with trade unions and employer organisations as well as civil dialogue are indispensable for making economic reforms sustainable and legitimate and convincing people the outcomes are worth their efforts and sacrifices. International and European labour and social standards provide a clear frame of reference, backed by practical experience in previous transformations in Eastern Europe, including EU member states.
  - Efficient and affordable public services are the best line of defence against social marginalisation and the danger of turning a political revolution into a social explosion. External assistance packages should clearly prioritise support for quality public services to stabilise the effects of the financial and economic reforms not undermine them over time.
5. The European trade unions and the international trade union movement express their full solidarity with the trade unions and workers in Ukraine. They will provide full support for their Ukrainian affiliates through the difficult times ahead to enhance their contribution to the recovery process and to develop systems of labour relations and social policy that Ukrainian working people deserve and have been fighting for.

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