

**Regional Committee for Europe  
of the World Health Organization  
Special session**

**10–11 May 2022**

**Remarks by  
H.E. Daniels Pavļuts  
Minister of Health of the Republic of Latvia**

*Dear like-minded colleagues of the EURO region,  
Dear Dr Kluge,*

I thank you for convening this meeting.

Latvia aligns with the statement of the European Union.

There are no such words in the diplomatic language that can fully express Latvia's condemnation of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, and, simultaneously, the heartache of the people of Latvia when learning daily of the suffering of the Ukrainian people. I wish to emphasize here that the Russian Federation army's attacks defy all reason and common sense and present a complete lack of conscience, as they target indiscriminately civilians, infants, medical and humanitarian personnel.

Dear colleagues,

I acknowledge the WHO efforts to mobilize assistance to Ukraine within the margins of its mandate. I recognize with awe that many countries in the EURO region have been selflessly providing medical aid to Ukraine even above their capacities, including my country. But this is not enough – we need to send the strongest possible political signal to the Russian Federation - not only in national capacities, but as an organization, and not only the EURO region, but the whole global community that is represented

within the WHO. The direct or indirect health impact of the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the Russian Federation's aggression stems well beyond Ukraine and well beyond the EURO region; the damage to WHO's reputation if this situation is ignored and "business continues as usual" could be detrimental to the whole of the United Nations.

This is why already shortly after the beginning of the war, I – together with my Baltic colleagues – directly addressed the leaders of this organization asking them to ensure that the Russian Federation does not take part of the WHO governing bodies and decision-making processes, until Russian Federation withdraws its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

We still have not received a reply to our call.

Latvia fully supports Ukraine's draft resolution "Health emergency in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression". In particular, we call upon the Regional Director to consider temporarily suspending all regional meetings in the Russian Federations and to consider possible relocation of the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases to an area outside the Russian Federation.

Thank you for your attention!