

Official statement by public relations trade organizations and appeal to the media on the Russian invasion of Ukraine

On behalf of the Polish public relations industry, we - the Polish Public Relations Association (PSPR), the Association of Public Relations Agencies (SAPR) and the Polish Public Relations Consultancies Association (ZFPR) - jointly and unanimously **condemn the unprecedented action of international aggression in the form of the attack of the Russian Federation, supported by Belarus, on free and independent Ukraine.** At the same time, **we express our solidarity with the Ukrainian people and all Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland.** There are many Ukrainian nationals working in the Polish PR industry. We stand by you in caring for the fate of your loved ones and friends in Ukraine as well as your Homeland!

We express our unequivocal opposition to war in Europe, declared by the regimes in Moscow and Minsk; war that violates such fundamental values as human life, democracy, human rights, and public trust, both locally and globally. We strongly **condemn the fact that this war is based on both military and communications means.** Russian warfare on land and in the air is accompanied by disinformation and psychological warfare with completely unacceptable use of offensive means of communication, cyber-attacks and massive troll farm operations to achieve military objectives.

War with heavy military equipment is being fought in Ukraine. But the propaganda and disinformation war is also being waged in other countries, including Poland. It is designed not only to confuse its audience, but also to intimidate the citizens of free democratic countries. Therefore, **we appeal to the media and publicists, especially those who operate in social media channels, to pay special attention to disinformation carried out by the Russian aggressor in the area of the so-called "fake news."** We ask for an extremely thorough application of fact-checking procedures, i.e. verification of the veracity of information coming both from the locations of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, and from the consequences of this aggression in economic and social areas.

We also appeal to all public relations experts in Russia and Belarus not to support with their actions the military aggression against their neighbour - the independent state of Ukraine. We also call on Polish PR companies and professionals to check that they are not working for entities directly supporting and representing in our country the war interests of the Russian aggressor. We find this unacceptable under the circumstances. **True public relations is based solely on truth and respect for values such as human life, freedom, democracy and sovereignty.** It is with great concern that we observe the escalation of activities that violate those values through the Russian assault on Ukraine and the disinformation activities aimed at other countries and societies. We all hope that this aggression and misinformation stops and peace is restored.

*Polish Public Relations Association (PSPR)
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