

No War in Ukraine!

Position Paper of Expert Groups of the German Association of Social Work (DGSA)

As the expert groups for Flight, Migration, and Critique of Racism and Anti-Semitism and for International Social Work within the German Association of Social Work we initiated this position paper because we work closely with people and communities affected by forced migration, violence, oppression and injustice. Amplifying the statements of the International Federation of Social Work from the 24th of February 2022 and of the International Association of Schools of Social Work from the 26th of February 2022, we stand decidedly with the people of Ukraine and against the unlawful violent attack of the Russian government on the Ukrainian territory. We are horrified by bombardments of civilian buildings and the extremely dangerous attack on the Chernobyl complex. We condemn any form of imperialism, proxy wars and national populism which are working against a peaceful cohabitation in a diverse globalized world.

As Social Work scientific community and practitioners, we know how quickly relationships can be destroyed and how long and painful the way of recovery and healing can be. We call on Russian officials to immediately seize military activities and, on all actors, to use all means to restore peace and provide safety to the people of Ukraine. We are in solidarity with Social Workers and other people of good will in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries providing emergency care to those affected by violence and possible forced out of their homes. Learning from other crises, we urge all actors to create conditions in which local Social Workers, researcher and scientists and as well other local experts can lead the response, supported by international actors but remaining the lead actors as they know best the local circumstances.

Policies and resources of the European Union must reflect a welcoming attitude towards those seeking safety. People from Ukraine and beyond should have the choice of where they go. The German government should stand up for this freedom of movement within the EU. As Social Work scientific community and practitioners in Germany, we call on the German government to provide adequate resources to host those seeking safety in Germany. We call on the German government to hold safe passages open and enable persons fleeing from Ukraine an unbureaucratic entry to Germany with an ensured perspective to stay in Germany. Discretionary powers that support people unbureaucratically to be able to stay in Germany (e.g. in the extension of the visa-free stay, about a study, work, family reunification) should be fully

exploited. From our experience, we know that community-based strategies and decentralized accommodations work best to provide people with a sense of safety and the ability to regain control over their lives. We urge the government to ensure that Ukrainian persons in Germany gain without unnecessary delays access to education, health care, adequate housing and the labour market. Restrictive policies implemented in past years must be reverted not only for Ukrainians but for all asylum seekers in Germany.

We call on our communities to welcome the people seeking refuge in Germany and support them. This is best done in mutual dialogue and with an attitude of partnership and solidarity. At the same time, we refuse any generalization of negative sentiments, hatred or discrimination against people who identify themselves or are identified by others as Russian. We expressly stand by the brave people in Russia and Russian people everywhere who have initiated protests and acts of civil disobedience to show that they desire peace and are against the military acts of their government.

We stand united with all people of good will working for peace and justice across national borders. In times where many forces try to divide and polarize this world, as Social Workers we seek common ground for the work of justice, peace and solidarity. We recall the pacifist traditions and roles of our profession in the international peace movement fighting for and defending democracy and human rights while facing wars in the past in Europe and beyond. Most importantly, we expand our solidarity to those who have been confronted with the inherent violence of borders in Ukraine and all over the world and we appeal to political leaders in Germany, EU and across the globe to make every possible effort to render wars and armed conflicts obsolete.

27th of February 2022

The German Association of Social Work (DGSA) and its expert groups:

Expert Group for Flight, Migration, and Critique of Racism and Anti-Semitism

Expert Group for International Social Work

Expert Group for Research

Expert Group for Climate Justice

Expert Group for Case Management in Social Work

Expert Group for Physical Activity, Sport and the Body

Expert Group for Ethics and Social Work

Expert Group for Social Work and Digitalization

Expert Group for Gender

Expert Group for Theory and Science of Social Work

Additional DGSA Groups and other entities are welcome to add their signatures by contacting Petra Daňková, Co-speaker of the Expert Group for Flight, Migration, and Critique of Racism and Anti-Semitism (DGSA) at petra.dankova@fhws.de.