



**Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier
in a press statement on Russia's attack on Ukraine
on 25 February 2022
at Schloss Bellevue**

Fellow Germans, our hearts are heavy these days. Russia's President has under duplicitous pretexts launched a war of aggression against Ukraine. What people there must now endure is terrible: death and injury, destruction, displacement and suffering of thousands upon thousands. And this is happening in our immediate neighbourhood, to neighbours of our neighbours. President Putin is spilling the blood of the same people that only recently he called his brothers and sisters. I call on President Putin to stop the insanity of this war! Now.

In our hearts and minds, we are with the people in Ukraine who are the victims of this war. For the people of Russia, too, their President's actions will have a bitter impact. I say to them all: we do not want to be enemies of the Russian people. Quite the opposite. But this injustice calls for a clear response. The Federal Government is working resolutely to this end, together with our partners in the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. Of this you can be certain.

And what is more, Germany will do its part in deterring and preventing Putin from taking violent action against our NATO Allies. For us Germans, this will come at a price. It is a watershed moment. Yes, a watershed that runs deep, for you, for your families and for myself – we feel it down to our bones.

But I have said so before this attack, and I will say it again: the Russian President should not underestimate the strength of democracies. Nor should we, my fellow Germans, underestimate the strength of our democracy.

It is good that people are taking to the streets and squares of our country to send this message. Let us show the people in Ukraine our sympathy and solidarity. The Russian President should not for one second believe that people in Germany and Europe simply accept this brutal violence.

Let us show those in Russia, too, who want peace that they do not stand alone. Now more than ever, let us make clear to each other and to our partners what is important to us: we want peace! We want freedom, justice and the right of self-determination for the peoples of Europe.