

Joint Statement

of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States

We, as the Transport Ministers of our countries, recall the *Call to Action on the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine*, presented in May 2022 in Leipzig by the group of like-minded countries, and the discussion held at the special Ministers' Roundtable on "Global Transport and War in Ukraine", held during the 2022 ITF Summit.

We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the people of Ukraine in their desire for justice, prosperity and stability as they keep bravely withstanding the unprovoked aggression and atrocities committed by Russia and supported by Belarus.

We reaffirm our condemnation in the strongest possible terms of the continuation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine as a blatant violation of international law including the U.N. Charter.

We recall that the intensified and targeted destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure by Russia, including transport networks and critical energy infrastructure, in conjunction with persistent and unjustified blockage of free navigation on the Black Sea, is an assault on the very foundation on which the ITF is built and goes clearly against the goals which ought to be pursued by the member states of this organization.

We agree with the need to continue the mechanism to limit the participation of Russia in the activities of the ITF until the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Ukraine, in accordance with internationally recognized borders, as a country that violates the main purpose of the creation of the ITF, namely the maximum use and the most rational development of transport of international importance.

We note that all this led to unprecedented disruptions and forced changes in international supply chains provoking uncertainty to people and businesses on the global scale.

We notice that these phenomena proved once more that transport networks and connectivity are of pivotal importance for security, military mobility, and economic resilience. Only a variety of transport routes can guarantee security of supply.

We acknowledge the emergent role of the region of Central and Eastern Europe as a gateway for Ukraine in procuring assistance from international partners, as well as keeping international trade and commerce alive. The region will remain crucial for the future reconstruction of a free, independent, and prosperous Ukraine.

We affirm the significance of diversification of transport corridors. To enhance access to global connectivity for Ukraine, we consider the harmonious development of both East – West, and North – South transport axes to be essential.

We acknowledge that the implementation of connectivity projects will boost competitiveness, contribute to the diversification of value chains and reduce strategic dependencies, including on critical raw materials.

We reaffirm our will to continue supporting Ukraine in the transport domain, notably in the context of providing assistance to refugees, further development of the Solidarity Lanes and maintaining the undisturbed supply of assistance to the Ukrainian nation. Consequently, we also wish to help strengthen the resilience of Ukraine's transport infrastructure, with a view not only to reconstruction, but also to planning and provision of support in building a new sustainable Ukrainian transportation system.

To attain these goals, **we need to continue and further stimulate** the efficient development of essential transport infrastructure in the region. Combined with maritime and air transport routes, this will significantly enhance the global connectivity of Ukraine, including the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Notably specific initiatives are already being undertaken at the continental level. An example of such important

initiatives is the establishment of the Baltic – Black – Aegean Sea TEN-T corridor, incorporating the Via Carpatia, and its railway component – Rail Carpatia, as well as Rail Baltica and other new lines connecting Baltic Seaports and Ukrainian ports, transforming the current Ukrainian railway gauge to the European gauge of the TEN-T corridor by increasing its capacities.

Alongside provision of transport infrastructure, **we need to focus on** supporting transport market operators in all modes of transport currently facing geopolitical challenges. These challenges result in economic instability, shortages of proper rolling stock and other transport equipment and hindering the effective addressing of imminent needs.

We note that resilient transport infrastructure, enhancement of connectivity and reconstruction of Ukrainian infrastructure destroyed by the Russian aggressor, as well as infrastructure connecting Ukraine through neighboring states with the world requires a stable level of funding and financing from international financial institutions. Only through this will we achieve long-term connectivity for Ukraine with the global economy, paving the way for a swift reconstruction of a prosperous and democratic Ukraine for the benefit of international community.

We count on continuous involvement of ITF and its member states in the reconstruction of Ukrainian infrastructure and enhancement of its global connectivity.

We call on the ITF to use its expertise and analytical insight to pursue its in-depth, comprehensive analysis to define the most efficient and effective ways to rebuild Ukraine's transport systems and restore its connectivity. Such analysis will constitute a solid basis for further work and discussion within the ITF, and will facilitate further actions and create synergies between actions undertaken at different levels.

Done at Rzeszów-Jasionka, Poland on 30 March 2023.