



Statement by President von der Leyen ahead of Europe Day

Brussels, 8 May 2022

My fellow Europeans, today our continent encounters shadows of a past we thought we had long left behind.

An atrocious war, senseless aggression and destroyed cities.

Millions of innocents fleeing their homes.

A people desperately struggling to determine its own future.

Europe stands at the side of Ukraine.

At the same time the Kremlin's invasion reminds us why we are celebrating Europe day.

The day when our peaceful, prosperous and united Europe was born.

Seventy-two years later, Europe is stronger and more united than ever.

We stand united in supporting our Ukrainian friends.

We are recovering from the COVID crisis.

Member States have already received 100 billion euros from our recovery fund NextGenerationEU.

Vast investments are securing millions of jobs and creating new chances in Europe every day.

We're working hard to protect the climate and make our continent independent of imported fossil energies.

Our Union is creating rules that will shape the digital age beyond our borders.

Europe could achieve all these things because we were united and determined.

That is why I am convinced and optimistic that our Union can also master the challenge posed by the war in Ukraine.

The citizens of Europe are showing the way.

Millions of Europeans – at all corners of our Union and from all walks of life – have mobilised to help their neighbours in need.

Millions have opened their door to Ukrainian refugees.

Millions more have sent food and clothes, or made a donation.

More than even before, Europeans feel that they belong to one European family.

That fills my heart with pride.

Happy birthday, Europe.

And happy Europe Day to all of you!

STATEMENT/22/2903

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