

Press release:

Shrines of Europe support Ukraine with open letters to Putin and European Parliament

The association of the most important European Marian shrines supports Ukraine's EU accession and calls on Putin to withdraw Russian troops immediately

(Fatima/Vienna, 1 April 2022) In a public writing to the European Parliament, the Shrines of Europe support Ukraine's wish to join the EU. And in an open letter to Vladimir Putin, the association of the most important European Marian shrines appeals to the Russian president to immediately withdraw Russian troops from Ukraine: "We oppose Russia's assault on Ukraine and utterly condemn the devastating hostilities carried out by the Russian Federation. We mourn every life lost in this unequal struggle, we sympathise with the suffering of countless people and lament the destruction of the entire country. With all resoluteness we appeal for an immediate end to this inhumane war and the restoration of peace for Europe and the world."

It is the first time since the founding of the Shrines of Europe in 1996 that the international Marian community has publicly addressed leading political representatives and institutions.

The Shrines of Europe are a municipal association of the European pilgrimage cities of Altötting (Germany), Częstochowa (Poland), Einsiedeln (Switzerland), Lourdes (France), Loreto (Italy), Fátima/Ourém (Portugal) and Mariazell (Austria). The organisation is actively committed to solidarity, democracy, peace, freedom and justice and is characterised by European identity, respect for equality and appreciation of all people – regardless of language, worldview, tradition or history.

Shrines of Europe is a association formed in 1996 at the local level in which Europe's most important Marian pilgrimage cities are represented: Altötting (Germany), Częstochowa (Poland), Einsiedeln (Switzerland), Lourdes (France), Loreto (Italy), Fátima/Ourém (Portugal) and Mariazell (Austria). The mission of the association is to bring the most important Marian shrines in Europe closer to pilgrims from all over the world under the common umbrella of "Shrines of Europe" and to tackle the challenges and demands of modern pilgrimage sites in the 21st century together. As great devotees of Mary, the last two European popes, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, visited all the Shrines of Europe, underlining the great importance of these places of pilgrimage for Europe. More Information: <http://www.shrines-of-europe.com>

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