

Speech of President Cordeiro at the International Summit of Cities and Regions on Ukraine

Dear Speakers, Prime Minister, Dear executives, Secretary, Dear President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Dear guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First all let me on behalf of the CoR and the delegations from the CoR here today, of the presidents of the political groups of the CoR, so the political leadership of the CoR. let me thank you for your kind invitation and for giving us the opportunity to be here today debating, discussing and also providing with our inputs and receiving your expectations about this joint work.

Following your invitation there are two or three issues that I would like to share with you, in this opening session.

First, on behalf of more than one million elected representatives from cities and regions across Europe, I would like to once more express our solidarity.

Solidarity about the reason that brings us here today. The role that local and regional communities are playing and can play, not only welcoming people that had to leave their countries but also strengthening the partnerships, the peer to peer approach namely, to face this difficult situation and to build cooperation from now on.

Second, several times it has been said that Ukraine is fighting for Europe.

And I think it is not about geopolitical or strategic reasons. It all comes to values, to principals. Core values and principals that also make the difference between the attackers and the ones that are attacked. Between the aggressors and the victims. A democratic, duly funded and respected local and regional self-government is one of those values and one of the value that the Committee of the Regions cherish most.

With this in mind we approach this summit not only in the context of the current war but also with our eyes and our souls in the future. A future where Ukraine is, like other candidate countries, a full member of the European Union. So, a lot of areas can be used to express this partnership. But one of them is exactly the capacity building aspect. The opportunity to strengthen local and self-government in Ukraine.

Have no doubt, we don't come here, as CoR, to tell you what to do, we come here to tell you that we stand ready to help you to do what needs to be done.

In this war, cities and regions from all across Europe and across the world, may not have the power to bring weapon and ammunitions.

But have no doubt that we bring with us the force and the spirit, the strength of the belief, because no matter what it takes, no matter how long it takes, we strongly believe that victory will be yours, victory will be ours,

Thank you so much for your attention and I wish you a wonderful job.