

ICC Prosecutor  
Karim A.A. Khan QC

Brussels, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Re: CCBE offer of assistance**

Dear Mr Khan,

I am writing as President of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE). The CCBE is recognised as the voice of the European legal profession representing, through its members, more than 1 million European lawyers.

CCBE membership includes the bars and law societies of 45 countries from the European Union, the European Economic Area, and wider Europe. The organisation consists of 32 member countries and 13 further associate and observer countries, including the Ukrainian National Bar Association (UNBA) and the Federal Chamber of Lawyers of the Russian Federation.

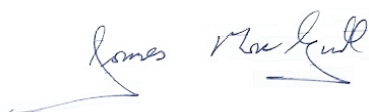
The CCBE represents European bars and law societies in their common interests before European and other international institutions. It regularly acts as a liaison between its members and the European institutions, international organisations, and other legal organisations around the world. Access to justice, the regulation of the profession, the defence of the rule of law, human rights and democratic values are the most important missions of the CCBE.

As you may be aware, during a meeting of the CCBE standing committee which took place on 25 February, we issued a statement concerning the situation in Ukraine and welcomed your own statement (see enclosed).

We note with interest recent developments, and in particular, your own statements indicating the support that you will require to discharge your functions effectively. In this respect, I am writing to suggest that CCBE member Bars and Law Societies might be in a position to assist you in your important work, and with that in mind, I would like to propose a meeting where you could outline your requirements and we could thereafter swiftly engage with our members to determine what might be practical, achievable and effective.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding the possibility for such a meeting and we wish you every support with your important work.

Yours faithfully,



James MacGuill SC  
Président

## CCBE Statement on the invasion of Ukraine

25/02/2022

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) represents the bars and law societies of 45 countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers. Since its creation, the CCBE has been at the forefront of advancing and defending the legal principles upon which democracy and the rule of law are based.

The CCBE joins EU institutions and the international community in their demand that Russia immediately ceases its illegal invasion of Ukraine. All States must respect the fundamental obligations, values, principles and freedoms set out in the Charter of the United Nations, the Statute of the Council of Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights, Budapest Memoranda on Security Assurances, and other general principles of public international law, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The CCBE strongly condemns the actions which breach these fundamental and generally accepted principles of international law. Respect for international laws and treaties must be maintained and upheld. In the current tragic context in which the Ukrainian people find themselves, the need to uphold the rule of law is of paramount importance.

The CCBE unequivocally condemns the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The unwarranted invasion of a sovereign state represents an egregious attack on the rule of law. We welcome the statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

*"I remind all sides conducting hostilities on the territory of Ukraine that pursuant to the declaration lodged on 8 September 2015, accepting jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court ("ICC" or the "Court"), my Office may exercise its jurisdiction over and investigate any act of genocide, crime against humanity or war crime committed within the territory of Ukraine since 20 February 2014 onwards.*

*Any person who commits such crimes, including by ordering, inciting, or contributing in another manner to the commission of these crimes, may be liable to prosecution before the Court, with full respect for the principle of complementarity. It is imperative that all parties to the conflict respect their obligations under international humanitarian law."*

We call on the Prosecutor to commence an immediate investigation in this respect with a view to the trial of the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, and his accomplices. The Ukrainian people deserve the protection of the international legal order.

The CCBE attaches particular importance to the respect of the universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity and, therefore, insists that Europe must remain an area of peace, freedom, security and justice. In particular, we express solidarity with our Ukrainian colleagues under attack.

We are mindful also of the position of those Russian colleagues who do not feel able to speak out against this illegal war for fear of their lives.

The CCBE additionally stresses that the right to asylum should be respected and assured in this context and humanitarian assistance provided to those in need. EU Member States and other European States are, therefore, encouraged to take the necessary measures in the field of border management and asylum to help people fleeing conflict and violence. Finally, the CCBE encourages lawyers to provide legal assistance to people seeking international protection and welcomes the fact that many legal professionals are already engaged in such actions.