

Statement of the “Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe“ on the war in Ukraine and relations with colleagues in Russia

16 March 2022

“The war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine has brought immeasurable suffering to the people in Ukraine and has led to a dramatic deterioration at international level. It also has direct impacts on research and science. The shelling of civilian targets by the Russian army has not only affected scientific institutions and infrastructure, but is also destroying the moral basis for scientific collaboration. In Germany there are many offers of help aimed at people from Ukraine, including scientific colleagues, who find themselves in trouble and are fleeing from violence. In addition, we need a broad engagement with the aim of supporting the Ukrainian institutions during this difficult time and preserving the country’s rich historic and cultural heritage for future generations.”

The Leibniz Association, which has extensive expertise and numerous contacts in the region through the Leibniz Central and Eastern Europe Network, set up its own matching support fund on 7 March. It has also advised its member institutions to suspend all institutional collaboration with state institutions and businesses in the Russian Federation. It expresses its respect for all scientists who have spoken out against the war despite the increased repression. Many researchers at Leibniz institutions have been working directly with scientists from Russia and Belarus for a long time. They have built these individual contacts on the fundamental values of freedom, self-determination and mutual esteem. Wherever possible, they will maintain these personal relationships, because they also represent an important connection to civil society in Russia and Belarus. In a situation in which independent information is increasingly being suppressed, we believe this form of communication is a vital duty owed by science to society.”

The “Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe“

Since 2015 several Leibniz Institutes related to Eastern Europa have been engaged in interdisciplinary collaboration within the Leibniz Central and Eastern Europe Network, in order to facilitate research on this region and foster dialogue between academia and society. This provides opportunities for collaborations within the fields of policy consulting, academic dialogue, research consortia, infrastructures and career development.

In terms of regional scope, the portfolio of the Leibniz Research Network encompasses the eastern members of the European Union as well as the south-eastern candidates for EU membership, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Belarus and the states of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

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