**Joint press release Strasbourg/Stuttgart/Dresden/Khmelnytskyi
to announce their quadripartite partnership project
on the occasion of the commemoration of the 1st year of war in Ukraine**

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New trinational cooperation: Strasbourg, Stuttgart and Dresden jointly support Khmelnytskyi

Solidarity unbroken even one year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Exactly one year ago, the Russian Federation launched a full-scale invasion of the whole of Ukraine, triggering a tragic war that resulted in massive destruction of civilian and energy infrastructure, terrible human suffering among the civilian population, and an influx of more than 8 million refugees into Europe.

The multiple challenges posed by this return of war to European soil, in violation of all the rules of international law, have provoked an unprecedented surge of solidarity across the continent towards the Ukrainian people. Alongside the States and other actors of emergency aid, associative and citizen initiatives, European local authorities have taken their full place in this immense wave of mobilization and support for the Ukrainian people.

Today, while continuing their mobilization through these different channels of solidarity, the Cities of Stuttgart (twinned with Strasbourg since 1962), Dresden (twinned with Strasbourg since 1990) and Strasbourg, European Capital of democracy, seat of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, wish to coordinate their efforts by supporting the City of Khmelnytskyi. This Solidarity Partnership emphasizes the central and essential role played by Ukrainian municipalities, which are on the front line to protect the population and ensure the maintenance of public services essential to the survival of everyone. Thus, the three cities have jointly decided to target their support, assistance and expertise on the City of Khmelnytskyi. The city is located in the west of Ukraine counts at around 300, 000 inhabitants and is winner of the Europe Prize 2021, awarded by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. This Prize crowns its strong European and international commitment as well as its efforts in ecological and social transition and citizen participation.

Mayor of the City of Strasbourg Jeanne Barseghian: «Such a partnership between two German cities, a French city and a Ukrainian city will allow both - to promote European solidarity with the "courageous Ukrainian people", winner of the Sakharov Prize 2022 awarded by the European Parliament, - and to strengthen Franco-German cooperation in this year of celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Elysée sealing the reconciliation between the two countries.»

The Mayor of the City of Dresden Dirk Hilbert acknowledges: «This innovative format of quadripartite partnership gives us, as the City of Dresden, the opportunity to support the Ukrainian population in their country and especially in the City of Khmelnytskyi. We can offer targeted help that is oriented towards local needs. Furthermore, in addition, such a quadripartite solidarity partnership offers the opportunity to optimally use common experiences.»

Stuttgart's Mayor Dr. Frank Nopper adds: «This partnership of the four cites should be a sign of friendship, encouragement and solidarity. The four cities share our liberal European values. They are a foursome for peace and liberty. On the basis of cooperation between cities, we want to move towards a common future for the peoples of Europe. »

The Mayor of the City of Khmelnytskyi, PhD Oleksandr Symchyshyn: "From the first hours of russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we felt the absolute support of our European partner cities. The assistance, both diplomatically and materially, has not halted even for a day. Therefore, we are confident that this quadripartite cooperation in a format that has never been used before will open up new opportunities for all its participants. We are steadfast in our desire to become members of a large European family and are convinced of our common future after the Victory in the war. I thank all cities participating in this unique agreement for the solidarity with the Ukrainian people!"

After initial informal exchanges between representatives of the four Cities, a quadripartite partnership agreement will be signed by the Mayors of Strasbourg, Stuttgart, Dresden and Khmelnytskyi by this summer, subject to prior validation by the municipal authorities of each city.

Strasbourg, Stuttgart and Dresden have been strongly mobilized throughout the year 2022, both in terms of reception and integration of Ukrainian refugees on their territory, but also in terms of political support to Ukraine through European networks of cities, through symbolic and cultural actions, or the financing of the sending of humanitarian aid through mutualized arrangements or through their twin cities in countries bordering Ukraine such as Poland.