

A Protest against Controversial Ideas in the "EASA Statement on the Russian war against Ukraine"

As anthropologists, we protest against the following serious distortion contained in EASA's Executive Committee's Statement on Ukraine: "We see him [Putin] as the main aggressor in the current situation that - as many anthropologists working in the post-socialist world have shown through their work - has its roots in both the Russian imperial ambitions and the NATO expansion into the Eastern European territory."

While we fully agree that the war against Ukraine has roots in Russian imperial ambitions, we reject the suggestion that Russia's armed aggression is caused by NATO expansion into the Eastern European territory. Such a statement would imply that sovereign countries of Eastern Europe do not have the right to join international alliances unless Russia approves, justifying Russia's colonialist and imperialist claims over countries in Eastern Europe. As anthropologists, we understand Ukraine's defensive actions as resistance against the reactionary empire and recognize the right of people of sovereign states to decide on membership in international alliances. The sentence also contains a deeply troubling ambiguity – referring to Putin as "main aggressor" implies that there are more aggressors in this war than Putin and Russia, assigning the blame for the war against Ukraine (even asymmetrically) to another party.

These concerns were brought to the attention of the EASA Executive Committee in a collegial manner. Applauding the Committee for the statement in its other aspects, we asked for reformulation or elimination of the above section.

We, members of the international anthropological community, wholeheartedly protest the dangerous distortion in the EASA Statement on Ukraine and ask for its revocation.

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