

**STATEMENT BY LITHUANIAN PSYCHOTHERAPY ORGANISATIONS ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE  
AND RUSSIAN PSYCHOTHERAPIST ORGANISATIONS**

VILNIUS

18 March 2022

We, the representatives of thirteen organisations standing for Lithuanian psychotherapists, view the war that started on 24 February 2022 on the territory of Ukraine as a brutal and selfish violent act against the independence of a sovereign state, its democratic civil society, and the very spirit of freedom.

Our thoughts and support go out to Ukrainian colleagues who have lost their loved ones, peace of mind, their homes, and the possibility to practice their profession and support families, like thousands of Ukrainians. Nevertheless, we believe in the strength of their spirit and professional identity based on the search for truth and the assertion of inner and outer freedom.

The undersigned psychotherapy organisations are members of international associations. Like numerous international professional organisations, we support their position on the war and their adopted measures. However, at the same time, we see that some international psychotherapeutic organisations, use wording that is too politically correct and does not fully reflect our position. We want to clarify what we mean.

Lithuania, Poland, and other Baltic countries are understandably more sensitive to Ukraine's suffering than their counterparts in the Western world. This war is close to our borders, and we experience the threat of being "the next in line" if Putinism subjugated Ukraine. We stand on the eternal historical margin separating Russia and Europe. In our minds, there exists a collision of two cultures (democratic and totalitarian), varying philosophies and attitudes towards human life, freedom, and fundamental values. The war in Ukraine has awakened collective layers of traumatic memory, passed on to us through ancestors who had suffered repression. We have learnt that silence means collaboration, while avoidance of speaking means denial of reality.

We want to express professional solidarity and publicly share the experience of Eastern Europeans, who for 50 years have undergone the brainwashing of active propaganda spread by Soviet Russia, and the reality of the repressive apparatus. After 32 years of independence and 18 years of NATO membership, this historical memory and threat have reoccurred.

We argue that today, there is no place for "productive silence" waiting for something progressive and meaningful to emerge in the area of human relations for each of the parties involved. Neutrality is merely immature naivety in the face of aggression. A neutral position "that shows understanding for both sides" supports the narrative imposed by Russian propaganda and demonstrations of power. Attempts to understand or empathise with both sides mean turning away from the essence of the aggression, making no difference between the victim and the attacker. Ukraine and its people are being destroyed HERE AND NOW! This is a humanitarian disaster and an enormous tragedy for entire Europe.

Therefore, we encourage our Western colleagues to refrain from the neutrality that is otherwise so valued in our profession. It is unethical and immoral to be neutral about aggression and violence. The brutal crime against humanity must be stopped immediately.

We call on psychotherapy organisations in all European countries, including Russia, to express a univocal position on the war in Ukraine. Please reconsider any ambiguous statements.

Every instance of silence will suggest that the fear of inconvenience is making us deny the reality of the suffering in Ukraine.

**We call upon European organisations of psychotherapists to make practical decisions on those Russian organisations that will refrain from condemning the war against Ukraine.**

Truth and ethics cannot be ambiguous in the face of war. Psychotherapy has always been about helping the suffering with understanding and empathy. Russia's collective shame and moral guilt will remain a subject of analysis for many decades after the war.

We call for action now because generations of Europeans will feel the psychological consequences of this war.

Glory to Ukraine! Truth and courage will prevail!

Signatories:

Lithuanian Society for Psychoanalysis  
Lithuanian Gestalt Association  
Association for Systemic Family Psychotherapy  
Kaunas Society for Studies of Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy  
Vilnius Society of Psychoanalysts  
Lithuanian Association of Analytical Psychology  
Lithuanian Association of Applied Psychology  
East European Association for Existential Therapy  
Lithuanian Group Analytic Society  
Lithuanian Psychodrama Association  
Adlerian Individual Psychology Psychotherapy and Analysis Association  
Lithuanian Gestalt Psychotherapy Association  
Lithuanian Psychotherapeutic Society