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## **Ukraine: Pejcinovic Buric (Council of Europe), “this is a dark hour for Europe and everything it stands for”.**

“I strongly condemn the Russian military attack against Ukraine in flagrant violation of the Statute of Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights. This is a dark hour for Europe and everything it stands for”. Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić said this in a statement calling on the Russian authorities to “immediately and unconditionally cease hostilities and return to diplomacy to restore peace and avoid further devastating consequences for the entire continent”. “Protecting civilian lives” is a matter of priority. Pejčinović Burić expressed her closeness to “Ukraine, its people and its authorities” while also announcing that the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe “will swiftly take necessary measures to respond to the current situation”. Indeed, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Tiny Kox, said he is convening “an urgent meeting of the Joint Committee between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe”. The PACE President is also considering advancing the parliamentary session scheduled for the end of April to “immediately” address “the situation and its consequences”. 18 representatives of the Russian Federation have a seat in the Parliamentary Assembly.

Valentina Bombelli