



Speech of the Minister of Education at the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC 2022)

Portugal's willingness to support the reconstruction of Ukraine is not a sheer act of solidarity and cooperation. It is the recognition of the absurdity of this war, of the cruelty of the attacks being perpetrated to civil targets, regardless of foundational International conventions.

His Excellency, the Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa, visited Ukraine and had the opportunity of witnessing the destruction and the impact of this war on the lives of Ukrainian families.

If war is always unfair, this sense of lack of justice is bigger when we think of children. No child should be forced to wake up with the noise of bombing, no child should be pushed out of her bed to run away, no child should be experiencing the fear of not knowing whether her father will be alive by the end of the day.

Schools are the best places to build peace, to ensure civility and democracy. The destruction of schools are vile acts of power against children, against their dreams. Targeting schools is attacking the core of humanity.

The Portuguese Government expressed its support to President Zelensky, concentrating our efforts in the reconstruction of schools. Our intervention will be in schools in the Region of Zhytomir, where schools have been partially or almost completely destroyed. According to meetings already held with the representatives of the Ukrainian authorities, this is the area where Portugal's intervention is required.

Please accept our commitment as an expression of solidarity, and above all as the means to tell the Ukrainian children that Portugal does not accept their sufferance and losses. We bet on them to guarantee that, through education, war will no longer be a solution for anything.