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*Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand*

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# **MINUTES**

**of the informal online inter-parliamentary exchange of views**

**10 May 2022, 08.00–09.00**

**Brussels/Wellington via WebEx**

The meeting opened at 08.00 on Tuesday 10 May 2022, with Ulrike Müller and Marja Lubeck (New Zealand) presiding.

The Chair thanked the New Zealand parliament and notably the Co-Chairs Marja Lubeck and Tim van den Molen, and the New Zealand Embassy in Brussels for having promptly and positively reacted to the letter that the Delegation sent out to stress the importance of international support to Ukraine and the role of parliamentary democracy.

The Chair also underlined the role of the community of democracies and reminded the political commitment of the European Parliament to the democratically elected institutions of Ukraine and the online speech by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to the EP plenary on 1st March.

Ms Müller recalled that the response of the European Union to the Russian aggression has so far been based on the following pillars; common political stand in both condemning the Russian invasion and in expressing full solidarity to Ukraine; adoption of far-reaching sanction packages to Russia, also through the ‘Freeze and Seize’ Task Force and the “Russian Elites, Proxies, and Oligarchs (REPO)” Task Force. Although no agreement has yet been found on embargo on Russian oil; support to the large number of Ukrainian civilians seeking shelter in the EU and implementation for the first time of the EU Temporary Protection system and military assistance to Ukraine.

The Chair also presented the perspective of the accession of Ukraine to the EU and its challenges and also reminded that two traditionally neutral countries, such as Sweden and Finland, wish to join NATO.

Following her introductory remarks, the New Zealand Co-Chair expressed strong solidarity to Europe and full support to Ukraine. She also expressed concern over security in Europe and possible direct impact on the Indo-Pacific and insisted that New Zealand (NZ) is very vocal in calling for full respect of International law and International Humanitarian Law.

Minister Twyford also insisted on the need to activate fully, the prerogatives of the International Criminal Court and to strengthen sanctions against Russian interests and oligarchs.

In the following debate, NZ members also expressed their concern to the fact that amongst the countries abstaining in the UN General Assembly, are some of the most populous ones and that should be taken into consideration when evaluating the real dimension of support for the position of democracies.

MEPs and NZ members also shared their experiences on Russian propaganda and its impact on EU and New Zealand citizens.

Both the EP and the NZ side concluded that the consequences of this war might have incalculable impact for Europe and for all democratic countries, but also for the rest for the world, considering also the role of Russia in the Pacific. They both stressed how much this crisis is a unique opportunity for the community of democracies to strengthen its profile as such, to consolidate its common vision and action in global governance, to ensure that our common values are for the future of the world.

The DANZ Chair also reminded that the European Parliament shall be honoured to receive a delegation of New Zealand MPs to celebrate the forthcoming 26th EU- New Zealand Inter-Parliamentary Meeting next July in Strasbourg, France.

The meeting closed at 8.55.