

European Society of Occupational Safety and Health (ESOSH)
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28 February 2022

Dear Global Occupational Safety and Health Community of Institutions & Professionals & Colleagues,

Re: Strongly Condemn Military Aggression - Statement by the European Society of Occupational Safety and Health (ESOSH)

We are writing to request your support and petition endorsement to **Strongly Condemn Military Aggression** against Ukraine.

As an Occupational Safety and Health Community we professionally protect people; with the highest measure being protection of human life from the impacts of work.

This is reflected within the European Society of Occupational Safety and Health (ESOSH) [Code of Conduct](#)¹ of our professional association, with currently more than 2,000 members from 13 countries.

"protection of the highest value – life and health of people..."

European Society of Occupational Safety and Health (ESOSH) strongly condemn armed aggression against Ukraine, we have deep concerns for safety, health and wellbeing of all civilians impacted by the crisis in the country, including those who are at work.

It has been previous experience that international safety and health organizational brands are silent regarding military conflict.

In recent years socio-political and macro-societal changes have emerged and there are numbers of advice available for companies that are considering making social or political stands.

PEW Research Center found that millennials and Gen Zers generally prefer companies that make their social and political opinions known and it has been experienced that belief-driven buyers refuse to buy from an organisation unless they know its stance on specific issues².

¹ <https://esosh.net/en/code-of-conduct-for-participants-of-european-society-of-occupational-safety-and-health/>

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/>

The key is for organisation to know who they are, and who their core stakeholders are, and what those stakeholders believe in.³

We believe that as an Occupational Health and Safety Organisation; your core stakeholders are Occupational Health and Safety Professionals who believe people should not be harmed at work.

Is silence really merely inaction or is it an acquiescence to injustice?⁴

We believe that silence on this matter by an Occupational Health and Safety Organisation could be viewed as acquiescence (the reluctant acceptance of something without protest).

We also believe that this contradicts the foundations of our Occupational Health and Safety profession; when military or armed aggression is commenced many people are at work; during military or armed aggression people are still at work, the workers must be safe.

The European Society of Occupational Safety and Health (ESOSH) are currently operating in Ukraine, and under heavy attack from the aggressor country of the Russian Federation; as an organisation we have agreed to take a stand for now and in the future to unequivocally condemn any military action of aggressive from one state against another.

We (The European Society of Occupational Safety and Health (ESOSH)) appeal to:

- 1. Other International institutions and individual professionals** working in the field of occupational safety and health to **also oppose military aggression as a crime against humanity.**
- 2. Please sign our online petition to show your support to Ukraine to strongly condemn military aggression against Ukraine.** <https://www.change.org/nomilitaryaggression>

Military aggression should be condemned by health and safety specialists worldwide.

We express our sincere gratitude to our colleagues - occupational health & safety specialists from Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America and Australia, who support Ukraine in this difficult time.

We assure you of our support if necessary in the future.

Sincerely,

ESOSH Founders Olha Bohdanova, Dmitry Grigorenko

³ <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/boycott-brands-era-easy-outrage>

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shaheenajanjuhajivrajeurope/2020/06/14/silence-is-compliance/?sh=4814f6d253f0>

Attached talking points for Boards, *"Business and Politics: When Should Companies Take a Public Position?"* Harvard Law School

Questions to assist an Occupational Health and Safety Organisation or any other on deciding if a particular position should be taken;

To help guide this decision, boards and CEOs would also benefit from a thoughtful consideration of the following questions:

- Is silence a real alternative? That is, will the CEO be asked for their view on an analyst call, in an employee town hall meeting, or otherwise, and if so, is a "no comment" response viable?
- Can a statement be crafted to take a responsible position in a non-incendiary fashion? (This was the path taken by corporations arguing for voting rights without making a specific attack on the new Georgia voting-related legislation.)
- Is joining a statement by an ad hoc group of companies or a business organization (such as the Business Roundtable) a preferable and feasible alternative to having the company speak out alone?
- What are the plans for the release of the statement both internally and externally? So that the company may speak with one voice and do so effectively, have individuals been designated as the only people authorized to respond to questions and concerns and are these individuals well prepared to do so?
- If the statement is critical of a specific piece of legislation or articulated governmental policy, does it fairly represent the substance of that legislation or policy?
- Is a statement, without additional action on the issue, going to be enough—or will it expose the company to assertions that it is "all talk"? Are there actions the company can take or existing efforts it can highlight in support of the issue?
- Does the proposed position align with the company's expressed values and culture?
- Are other actions by the company going to be viewed as inconsistent with the statement, exposing the company to being challenged as hypocritical?
- If it is determined that it is not in shareholders' long-term interests for the company to take a position, can the CEO nevertheless speak out personally?

<https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2021/05/06/business-and-politics-when-should-companies-take-a-public-position/>