

Preliminary report on national activities in the ambit of Europe-For-Peace during the weekend of the first anniversary of the Ukraine war the weekend of 24-26 February 2023

Italy

It seems save to say that more than 100.000 people participated in the more than 120 decentralized demonstrations and vigils throughout Italy during the weekend of the first anniversary of the Russian aggression against Ukraine (24-26 February 2023), asking for an immediate ceasefire and the start of peace negotiations under the auspices of the UN or another international organization: "Peace is the only victory we need". Most activities were organized by local supporters of the Europe-For-Peace network comprising catholic groups, unions and civil society organizations active throughout the year in hosting refugees from the war and supplying material aid in convoys to the zones of conflict.

National press and TV took almost no notice of the activities, except few exceptions. However, it is by now widely recognized also by the national media that a majority of Italian people does not support the continuation of Italian weapon delivery to Ukraine without contemptuous initiatives towards a ceasefire and peace negotiations.





Great-Britain – London

Several thousand marched through central London on Saturday demanding peace now in Ukraine. The march, called by the Stop the War Coalition and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, began at the main BBC building and ended in Trafalgar Sq, the setting for so many historic protests. Jeremy Corbyn MP, currently suspended as a Labour parliamentarian, spoke at the start of the demo and the rally at the end was addressed by a range of trade unionists, political figures and leaders of the movement including Brian Eno, Andrew Murray, Lindsey German, Kate Hudson, Claudia Webbe MP, and German MP Andrej Hunko.

It was a lively protest which voiced its opposition to both the Russian invasion and NATO's escalation of the war and called for an end to plans for increased military spending during a cost of living crisis.

With so much pro-war propaganda currently doing the rounds and so few voices for peace in our parliament, it was an extremely important day for the anti-war movement.





Photos: Steve Eason

Belgium - Brussels

In Brussels, Belgium, on Sunday afternoon, 26 February, almost 3000 people marched under a nice winter sun with the banner "Stop war in Ukraine! Ceasefire! Negotiations!".

It was an initiative of the platform 'Europe For Peace & Solidarity', which is composed of more than 60 organizations, among peace movements, trade unions, NGO's, youth, climate and refugee organizations from the broad civil society.

At the start of the rally, representatives of peace movements, trade unions and social movements highlighted the various demands of the platform's manifesto. While condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine, all pointed to the need for an end to the war through dialogue and negotiations, instead of adding more fuel to the fire.

National TV and other media outlets were present to cover the demonstration.





Croatia – Zagreb

The Ad hoc feminist anti-war coalition organized a peaceful gathering on the main square in the City center on Friday, February 24 at noon. Approximately 30 women gathered and held a big banner with the slogan Stop the War Now! After staging the banner, we read aloud our manifesto and handed out the leaflets. After standing for half an hour on the main square, we walked to the building of Croatian National Theatre, where two days ago the anti-war art installation named "Imagine" was set. (Author of the installation is Croatian conceptual artist Vladimir Dodig Trokut.) There we also held our Stop the War banner and read four anti-war poems written by Croatian, Polish, Ukrainian and Russian women-poets.

The event was very well covered by Croatian national television, and other printed and Internet media.

The Ad hoc feminist anti-war coalition' manifesto, as well as the event itself was supported by several women's and peace organizations. (Center for women war victims rata – ROSA, Center for Women Studies Zagreb, Center for Peace Studies, CESI, Documenta – Center center for dealing with the past, Women's Room - Center for Victims of Sexual Violence, Women's Network Croatia.)

