

Stop the Escalation Spiral

We are physicists, employees and associates in national and international research institutions. We are proud of our international contacts and collaborations and we are proud to promote scientific collaboration across the world as a driver for peace.

We condemn the war against Ukraine in the strongest terms and request that this war stops immediately. We are disgusted by war crimes, and demand an immediate ceasefire.

We are shocked by the mentions of a Third World War, and we condemn strongly all nuclear threats.

This escalation spiral has to be stopped now!

Scientific collaboration with Russian and Belarusian institutions have been suspended in many western countries. This includes suspending scientists with Russian and Belarusian affiliations from experiments that have been built up together over decades and from other common scientific projects, and suspending common publications. Open international conferences and workshops cannot be held together anymore. These restrictions are being imposed on non-profit, non-military and no-dual-use areas which were built up in the past as bridges between nations. The restrictions affect peaceful research in general, and are imposed on people not responsible for this war, in violation of good scientific and moral practice.

The sanctions imposed on scientists are counterproductive, they do not put pressure on the Russian government, but make communication among scientists difficult and in some cases impossible. They often affect colleagues who share our condemnation of the war and have endangered their own welfare by expressing their opinions publicly. These sanctions will not help to achieve a ceasefire or resolve the conflict. On the contrary, these measures will isolate Russian and Belarusian scientists and decouple them from international discussions, in science and elsewhere.

Our scientific research is concentrated on fundamental questions of universal interest. Scientific cooperation should remain open across political divides, and not be subordinated to political goals.

We call upon the directorates of research institutions, rectors of universities, scientific academies, leaders of experimental collaborations, organizers of scientific meetings and members of scientific committees to:

- remove the sanctions against scientists, since science has to be independent of political interests and such sanctions are detrimental to communication channels that can help achieve a peaceful world;
- continue to promote non-military and peaceful scientific projects that adhere to the ethical principles of science and follow good scientific practice;
- continue to allow common scientific publications and participation in open conferences;
- maintain scientific cooperation, so as to avoid the useless proliferation of sources of tension that escalate the conflict and extend it to the scientific and personal relations within the physics community.

We appreciate the complexity of the situation and the pressures acting on scientific institutions, but we believe that appropriate balanced and reasonable approaches can be pursued by implementing the above points, as reflected in the policies adopted by many organizations.