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## **Justitia et Pax Europa: solidarity visit to Lviv. “Ukrainian people defend idea of a free and democratic Europe”**

The Presidents of Justitia et Pax Europa, Maria Hammershoy and Mgr Antoine Hérouard, along with the Secretary-General Stefan Lunte, made a solidarity visit to Lviv, Ukraine, on 12-13 February. According to a statement released today, they had been invited by Yuriy Pidlisny, chairman of the Commission on Family and Lay Affairs of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, a member of the network of thirty national Justice and Peace Commissions in Europe. “During our visit, we have better understood that the Ukrainian people are not only defending their freedom. Through their sacrifice, they are also defending the idea of a free and democratic Europe as a whole”, said Mgr Hérouard upon his return from the trip. The two days were full of meetings, namely with the Greek Catholic Archbishop Ihor Vozniak of Lviv and his auxiliary bishop Volodymyr Hrutsa, with Father Bogdan Prach, former Rector and Vice President of the Academic Senate at the Ukrainian Catholic University, as well as with the President of Caritas Ukraine Tetiana Stawnychy. The delegation visited several military cemeteries and saw the damage caused by Russian missile strikes on buildings. A Holy Mass and prayers were offered for war victims. “It is our constant concern to protect the life and dignity of the human person and to share the pain of the war”, Maria Hammershoy noted, pointing out that the Church in Ukraine is showing its essence “in the care of the victims of war, by listening to their stories and supporting their basic needs”. The trip to Ukraine took place following the meeting of Secretaries Generals of the European Justice and Peace Commissions (Berlin, 9-11 February), which reiterated the need to continue supporting the Ukrainian people.

Filippo Passantino