



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Special Permanent Council 1405 Vienna, 13 January 2023**

#### **EU Statement on the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine**

1. Mr. Chair, the European Union thanks you for convening this Special meeting of the Permanent Council. It is important to uphold international law and its principles, including the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, and to stand by a participating State, Ukraine that is being attacked by another one, Russia. We have to stand with any partner that is under attack by an aggressor. In this context, we applaud the intention of the Foreign Minister of North Macedonia to pay his first visit in his capacity as CiO to Ukraine.
2. Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine has been raging for almost 11 months. What many in Moscow had hoped would be "a small and victorious war" has turned into prolonged bloodshed and devastation. This war is a threat to European and global security and stability and an enormous human tragedy. We once again condemn Russia, as well as its accomplice Belarus, for its shameful war of aggression. We underline Russia's full responsibility and accountability for all its reprehensible acts.
3. Mr. Chair, let us repeat once again - the Kremlin's propaganda and disinformation is not credible. There is no so-called "special military operation", but an illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war waged by Russia against Ukraine. There is no "liberation" of Ukraine's territories by Russia, but destruction, occupation and attempted illegal annexation. Likewise, the "Orthodox Christmas ceasefire" announced by President Putin for January 6 and 7, was another distraction to step up the Russian offensive.
4. During the holiday period, Russia's systematic missile and drone attacks against Ukraine, its critical infrastructure and civilians, have not ceased. On 24 December, Russia launched missile strikes and MRLS attacks on civilian objects in Zaporizhzhia oblast, and on 25 December, against Kupiansk. On 28 and 29 December, the Russian Armed Forces targeted Kherson, destroying, inter alia, several medical facilities. From

31 December to 2 January, multiple Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv, were massively targeted by missiles and “Shahed” drones. On 9 January, an airstrike was launched against Kharkiv, as well as against the civilian infrastructure of the Donetsk, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions of Ukraine. In the town of Ochakiv in the Mykolaiv region, at least 15 civilians were reportedly killed, including a two-year-old child.

5. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia’s missile and drone attacks against Ukraine’s critical infrastructure, notably its energy, heating and water supply systems, and against residential and medical facilities, and Russia’s deliberate targeting and killing of civilians. Such attacks may amount to war crimes. Russia’s political and military leadership, and all those responsible, will be held to account. The EU is also determined to pursue ways to secure accountability for the crime of aggression, which is of concern to the international community as a whole.
6. We stand in full solidarity with Ukraine, exercising its inherent right to self-defence, and with the Ukrainian people, rightfully and bravely defending their country, its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We commend the people of Ukraine for their courage and determination.
7. The EU condemns Russia’s intensified efforts to distribute Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens in the illegally occupied parts of Ukraine. The EU has not and will never recognise passports, issued as part of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU decision adopted on 14 December 2022 further confirms that these passports will not be considered as valid travel documents.
8. The EU deplores the reported unlawful forcible deportations and transfers of Ukrainian citizens, including children, to Russia. According to Ukraine’s Ombudsman, Dmytro Lubinets, currently there are confirmed reports of more than 13,000 children transferred to Russia. The real number is likely much higher. Russia must cease these unlawful acts and all Ukrainians, especially children, must be immediately allowed to return safely.
9. The EU remains gravely concerned about the deteriorating situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, illegally annexed by Russia. This particularly concerns all those who object to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. On 28 December, Iryna Danylovich, a civic journalist, was sent to prison by a so-called “court” in Feodosiya for 7 years. People are being detained in Crimea for showing any sign of solidarity with Ukraine, be it just singing

Ukrainian songs. We urge Russia to immediately and unconditionally release all those illegally detained throughout the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, including the three SMM staff members.

10. To conclude, we demand that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. The EU is ready to support Ukraine's initiative for a just peace in full respect of international law and OSCE principles and commitments. To date, Russia has not shown any genuine willingness regarding a fair and sustainable peace.
11. In addition, we urge the Belarusian authorities to refrain from any further involvement in or facilitation of Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as to immediately stop allowing its territory to serve as a launchpad for attacks against Ukraine, which is an aggression in itself. Belarus must also stop providing military support to Russia. We reiterate that any further actions and, in particular, any direct involvement of the Belarusian military in Russia's war of aggression will be met by new and strong restrictive measures.
12. We will continue to provide Ukraine with all necessary political, military, financial and humanitarian support for as long as it takes.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.