



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1409 Vienna, 2 February 2023

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

1. The European Union and its Member States stand united in full solidarity with Ukraine, which is exercising its inherent right to self-defence in accordance with international law, notably Article 51 of the UN Charter. We commend the courageous people of Ukraine, fighting for their country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russia's ongoing war of aggression.
2. We remain steadfast in our political, military, financial and humanitarian support for Ukraine for as long as it takes. As a strong sign of our solidarity and support, the College of the European Commission visits Ukraine today, and tomorrow the 24th EU-Ukraine Summit will take place in Kyiv.
3. In this context, let us reiterate our appreciation to the previous and current OSCE CiOs, Poland and North Macedonia, as well as to the OSCE Secretary General, for setting up the OSCE's Support Programme for Ukraine (SPU) in such short timelines. The OSCE has been supporting Ukraine and its reform efforts for many years despite Russia's obstructionism. We express our support for the SPU and its projects, which address some of the immediate challenges to civilians posed by Russia's war of aggression and support the long-term democratic and social resilience of Ukrainian institutions and civil society organisations. We wish to thank all donors for their contributions to the SPU and encourage all other OSCE participating states to do likewise.
4. Mr. Chair, Russia's full-scale brutal and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine continues unabated for more than 11 months. Last week, Russia carried out another massive missile and drone attack on Ukrainian cities. Throughout this past weekend, Russia carried out attacks on the cities of Kherson and Kharkiv, where exclusively residential areas were reportedly targeted once again. At yesterday's side event, we

listened to the harrowing testimonies of three residents of the Kherson region who managed to survive the Russian occupation. And last night, another residential building, this time in Kramatorsk, was hit by a Russian missile, reportedly killing at least three people and injuring dozens.

5. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's persisting heinous attacks against residential, school and medical facilities, and against Ukraine's critical civilian infrastructure, notably its energy, heating and water supply systems, as well as almost daily explosions in the vicinity of nuclear power plants. Deliberate targeting of civilians or civilian objects is a war crime. Russia's political and military leadership, and all those responsible for such acts, will be held to account. The EU is also determined to contribute to securing accountability for the crime of aggression, which is of concern to the international community as a whole.
6. The scale of destruction caused by Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, and in particular Russia's systematic attacks against Ukraine's critical infrastructure and other civilian targets, is horrific. According to the Kyiv School of Economics, the total amount of such damage was nearly €138 billion as of December 2022. The EU is committed to help the people of Ukraine to rebuild their country. On 26 January, the EU launched the Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform to support Ukraine's repair, recovery and reconstruction process.
7. The EU remains deeply concerned about the reported mistreatment of Ukrainian Prisoners of War by the Russian Armed Forces, as well as by Russia's paramilitary "Wagner" group, both engaged in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. We urge Russia to stop these illegal acts and to treat Ukrainian POWs in full conformity with international humanitarian law. We also urge Russia to provide the ICRC with immediate and unconditional access to all Ukrainian POWs.
8. The EU also deplores the reported unlawful forcible deportations and transfers of Ukrainian citizens, including children, to Russia and within Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories by Russia. Russia must cease these unlawful acts and all Ukrainians, especially children, must immediately be allowed to return safely.
9. Mr. Chair, in the course of the last weeks, we have been addressing the issues of the illegal detention by Russia of OSCE staff and of the illegal transfer of more than 70 SMM armoured vehicles from Russia to eastern Ukraine. Let us repeat this once again - these

actions are illegal, irresponsible and unacceptable. Russia must immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained OSCE staff members. At the same time, Russia must return all OSCE assets to their legitimate owner, all OSCE participating States, and prevent any misuse related to its war of aggression.

10. Mr. Chair, the Kremlin's propaganda and disinformation campaign will not succeed in spreading an illusionary alternative reality. Let us be clear – first, despite Russia's revisionist historical narratives, Ukraine is a sovereign and independent country, and a fellow participating State of the OSCE. Second, our support to Ukraine has one main objective – to help it rightfully defend itself from Russia's war of aggression, in full compliance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. And third, nothing has caused greater damage to the international reputation or socio-economic development of Russia than its imperialist war and its complete disregard of international law, including the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments, which constitute the basis of our peaceful coexistence. The sooner Russia ends its war of aggression, the better for all, including for Russia and its people.

11. 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. 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 further actions such as, in particular, any direct involvement of the Belarusian military in Russia's war of aggression will be met by new and strong restrictive measures.

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.