



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council 1395 Vienna, 20 October 2022

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

1. For almost eight months now, we have been witnessing unprecedented acts of Russian aggression against a sovereign, democratic, peaceful and independent neighbouring country, Ukraine, in flagrant violation of, and total disregard for, the UN Charter, international law and OSCE's principles and commitments - the core principles that underpin the rules-based international order. Russia's brutal expansionism and escalatory steps, its efforts to deny Ukraine's existence as a sovereign and independent state, its actions endangering global food security, its attempts to intimidate Europe by threatening our energy security and, not least, its irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, are putting global peace and security at risk.
2. With its indiscriminate missile and drone attacks all over Ukraine, targeting of civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings as well as energy, heating and water supply facilities, Russia is inflicting maximum harm on innocent civilians and the Ukrainian economy. Damage to key power stations is, in particular, negatively impacting people in vulnerable situations, especially as winter approaches. We are gravely concerned for the safety of children, older persons, people with disabilities and others requiring adapted care and support. We also regret that places of worship and cultural heritage sites have been damaged or destroyed. We remind Russia that attacks targeting civilians and objects indispensable to the survival of civilian population are prohibited under international humanitarian law.
3. Many of the methods that Russia is reportedly using reminds us of times we thought were long gone; the killing of civilians in their homes or on the street, the use of so-called "filtration" camps to identify and target alleged "opponents", the use of sexual violence

as a weapon, deportations and forced adoptions of Ukrainian children into Russian families, as well as the mistreatment of prisoners of war. Such acts are forbidden under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We urge Russia to provide the ICRC immediate access to the prisoners of war, including those held in Olenivka, and to ensure they are treated in full compliance with International Humanitarian Law. There can be no impunity for war crimes or crimes against humanity. We therefore welcome and support the ongoing international efforts to investigate any war crimes and other atrocity crimes in order to hold perpetrators and those responsible to account.

4. We unequivocally condemn and will never recognise the attempted illegal annexation by Russia of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, just as we have never recognised the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol in 2014. Moreover, we do not and will never recognise the illegal so-called 'referenda' that Russia orchestrated at gunpoint as a pretext for its violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The unlawfulness of this attempted acquisition of territory through the use of force was condemned by 143 states through the UN General Assembly resolution on defending Ukraine's territorial integrity, which was adopted last week. Moreover, during last week's Permanent Council, 45 OSCE participating States condemned in the strongest possible terms Russia's ongoing aggression and military attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.
5. We continue to be gravely concerned regarding Russia's actions in and around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant as well as other nuclear objects and sites in Ukraine. These acts are posing a threat to the safety and security of the nuclear facilities and their personnel and are significantly increasing the risk of a nuclear incident or accident. Shelling has once again forced the disconnection of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant from the grid, which led to reliance on emergency diesel generators. Moreover, following the decree attempting to illegally transfer this nuclear power plant into Russian Federal property, which the EU condemns in the strongest possible terms, Russia has kidnapped its Deputy Director for Human Resources and reportedly two other staff members. We are also concerned about reports that Russia is exerting pressure on the staff to sign new contracts with the illegal Russian administration or risk mobilisation into

the Russian Armed Forces. We urge Russia to immediately stop all military hostilities and withdraw all its armed forces and military equipment, including from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, to fully adhere to the seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security and to immediately hand back full and exclusive control of the power plant to the Ukrainian authorities. We stress that a continued IAEA presence at the site with unhindered access must be maintained.

6. Ukraine, as any sovereign State, has the right to choose its own future and destiny. The EU resolutely supports the Ukrainian Armed Forces' efforts to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty in line with Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence as laid out in Article 51 of the UN Charter. Last Monday, the EU adopted the sixth tranche of military support to the Ukrainian Armed Forces bringing our total military assistance to Ukraine under the European Peace Facility to EUR 3.1 billion. In addition, we decided upon the establishment of a military assistance mission on EU soil to support and train the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The European Union will also continue to provide political, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine.
  
7. The EU remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and demands that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraws all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, including the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and urge Russia to immediately stop its illegal aggression. We urge the Belarusian authorities to refrain from any further involvement in Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and, in particular, to immediately stop providing military support and allowing the territory of Belarus to serve as a launchpad for attacks against Ukraine and Ukrainian civilians. We reiterate that any further actions and, in particular, any direct involvement of the Belarusian military to Russia's war of aggression will be met by new and strong restrictive measures.

This year's Sakharov Prize awarded by the European Parliament to the Ukrainian people is a tribute to their determination, courage and resilience in their fight for freedom, democracy and our common European values. We will continue to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE and REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Countries BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\* and GEORGIA, 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.

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