



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council 1399 Vienna, 17 November 2022**

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

1. The European Union condemns the barbaric missile attacks that Russia perpetrated on Ukrainian cities and civilian infrastructure on Tuesday. Allow me also to express our sincere condolences for the loss of life after the explosion that took place in Eastern Poland, near the border with Ukraine, on the evening of the same day. We offer our full support for, and assistance with, our Member State, Poland, in the ongoing investigation on the tragic incident. We will remain in close touch to determine appropriate next steps as the investigation proceeds.
2. Mr Chair, we are now in the 9<sup>th</sup> month of Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. Nine months of unprecedented levels of death and destruction. In liberated areas across Ukraine, such as the towns around Kyiv: Bucha, Borodianka, Irpin, Hostomel, heinous acts have been committed by the aggressor since the very first days of Russia's invasion. Bodies of tortured and killed civilians were found on the streets, in homes and in mass graves after the Russian Armed Forces had withdrawn from the areas. The same goes for any newly liberated Ukrainian town, including Izyum and now Kherson. In Mariupol, it is estimated that at least 100 000 civilians have been killed due to Russia's military aggression and about 22 000 of these were buried in mass graves. These massacres and horrendous deeds that the Russian Armed Forces have committed in Ukraine will forever be inscribed in the list of the worst atrocities committed on European soil.
3. Since the very first day of the aggression, we have been hearing shocking reports from survivors of Russian so-called detention centres and "filtration" camps. Survivors

describe being subjected to psychological terror, electric shock, waterboarding, severe beatings, sexual violence and threats at gunpoint.

4. We will never forget the reports of alleged “opponents” of Russia’s aggression being identified, seriously ill-treated and sometimes deported to the Russian Federation. We are especially shocked by the reports of how children are forcibly relocated and illegally adopted into Russian families. We are also appalled by every report of sexual violence as well as the grave mistreatment of prisoners of war in Russian detention centres. In addition, we are dismayed by how Russia has been completely ignoring its responsibilities to the people who serve our organisation, as OSCE staff are being unlawfully detained. We urge for their immediate and unconditional release. This is horrible behaviour and a remnant of times long believed to be past.
  
5. Every day we receive reports about Russia’s continuous, massive and deliberate attacks targeting civilians as well as civilian objects and infrastructure. There is also documentation demonstrating that Russia is deliberately killing and injuring civilians, using cluster munitions, white phosphorus bombs, unguided explosive devices and is conducting air strikes indiscriminately in populated areas, destroying entire neighbourhoods, schools, hospitals. Energy and water infrastructure, are severely damaged. We vividly remember Russia’s brutal attack on the Kramatorsk railway station full of civilians trying to flee Russia’s aggression and the missile attack on a shopping centre in Kremenchuk. Last Tuesday’s massive attack on Ukraine is further proof of Russian efforts to compensate for its military failures by increasing the human suffering of the Ukrainian people, which is deplorable. These are just a few examples of violations of international humanitarian law by the Russian Armed Forces, which could amount to war crimes. Despite the growing evidence, we hear the blatant lie from the Russian Federation that it is only targeting military objects. But many continue collecting documentation about these crimes, including the experts from Moscow Mechanism missions and ODIHR. We also welcome the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution on the “Furtherance of Remedy and Reparation for Aggression against Ukraine”, endorsing the creation of an international Register of Damage for Ukraine, as a step toward holding Russia accountable.

6. 9 months ago, we could never have imagined a UN Security Council P5-state in possession of nuclear weapons starting a war of aggression against a neighbour and forcefully taking over nuclear facilities, thereby risking a nuclear disaster of potentially incalculable devastation for human life and the environment. Neither could we have believed that this aggressor state would use irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, thus risking grave consequences for global security. In this vein, we urge Russia to immediately stop all 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.
7. Finally, Russia showed its real intentions when it attempted to illegally annex territory through sham referenda held in Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, replicating the methods it used to illegally annex the Crimean peninsula in 2014. To this, we have only one thing to say: our support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders remains unwavering. We will never recognise any illegal entities or any attempted illegal annexation of territory in Ukraine or elsewhere. All states have an obligation under international law not to recognise an annexation resulting from the threat or use of force. Any territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force is a violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and shall be considered null and void.
8. We will always stand up for international law and the rules-based international order, which is laid out in the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions and the OSCE founding documents including the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter. These documents are crystal clear: no State has the right to use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of a third country. Intentionally directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects in armed conflicts constitute war crimes. There is therefore no doubt that Russia bears full responsibility for its acts of military aggression and the destruction and loss of life it has caused. We are steadfastly determined to do our utmost to ensure that there is no impunity for any possible war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocity crimes committed during Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. We

are supporting all efforts to document evidence of any crimes committed in Ukraine, including within the OSCE.

9. We continue to condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and urge Russia to immediately bring it to an end. We demand 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. In addition, we urge the Belarusian authorities to refrain from any further involvement in 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.
  
10. We will continue to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. 9 months have now passed since Russia chose to disregard everything, from its international commitments to human decency. 9 months of death and destruction. We commend the resistance and resilience shown by the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the population. The liberation of Kherson is another important step toward the full restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity. Ukraine will prevail.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Countries BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\* and 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, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.