



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1407 Vienna, 19 January 2023

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

1. At the outset, allow me to express our heartfelt condolences for the tragic demise of so many Ukrainian civilians, including children and the Ukrainian Minister of Interior, yesterday morning in a helicopter crash near Kyiv. We stand with the Ukrainian people in this moment of grief. Our thoughts are with the families of those lost and wish those injured a swift recovery.
2. Mr. Chair, on 14 January, just a day after you convened a Special meeting of the Permanent Council to address Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, Russia launched another massive aerial attack against numerous Ukrainian cities and regions, targeting critical civilian infrastructure and residential buildings. Missile debris were reportedly also found in the northern part of the Republic of Moldova after this attack. Russia also hit a multi-storey residential building in Dnipro, in an exclusively residential area far from the front lines. According to the Ukrainian authorities, the building was hit by an anti-ship missile. As a result, 72 apartments were completely destroyed and another 230 damaged. During this single attack, at least 45 civilians, including 5 children, were killed, and more than 79 persons, including 16 children, were injured. Around 40 people are still missing. We strongly condemn this heinous act aimed at breaking the resolve of the Ukrainian people.
3. The attack against civilians and civilian objects in Dnipro is not an isolated case. On 15-16 January, Zaporizhzhia again came under Russian fire, with missiles reportedly falling in very close proximity to residential buildings. On 16 January, the Russian Armed Forces shelled Kherson, and reports showed that they destroyed, inter alia, a maternity hospital and residential buildings.
4. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's persisting attacks against Ukraine's critical infrastructure, notably its energy, heating and water supply systems,

and against residential and medical facilities. Deliberate targeting of civilians is a war crime. 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.

5. 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. We will continue providing Ukraine with all necessary political, military, financial and humanitarian support for as long as it takes. This week we are disbursing 3 billion EUR of our macro-financial assistance to Ukraine, the first part of the overall 18 billion EUR planned for 2023.
6. We welcome the fact that the very first visit by North Macedonia's OSCE CiO, Foreign Minister Osmani, was to Kyiv. We applaud the principled position by the CiO to put OSCE principles and commitments as the sole basis for their chairpersonship and to keep Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine at the centre of the OSCE's priorities across all three dimensions, standing by a fellow participating State, Ukraine, that is being brutally attacked by another, Russia.
7. Mr Chair, in the course of the last 11 months, Russia attacked not only Ukraine, but also the founding principles and values of the OSCE. Since April 2022, Russia has been illegally detaining three OSCE SMM staff members on dubious charges. Last weekend, we received further disturbing reports about the alleged transfer of more than 50 SMM armoured vehicles from Russia to eastern Ukraine, where they may be used to support Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. This is unacceptable. Russia must immediately and unconditionally release all detained OSCE staff members and return OSCE assets to their legitimate owner, the OSCE and its participating States.
8. The EU is also 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, 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 Ukrainian POWs.

9. Mr. Chair, the Kremlin's cynical propaganda and disinformation campaign will not succeed in spreading the alternative reality it cultivates in Russia. It is Russia that illegally and unjustifiably attacked Ukraine. It is Ukraine that is defending itself against Russia's war of aggression, in full conformity with Article 51 of the UN Charter, contrary to Russia's false claims. The EU, together with its international partners, provides support to Ukraine and its people to help them defend themselves from the aggressor, Russia.
10. Russia's external aggression continues to be mirrored by the ever more violent internal repression of all dissenting voices. It has now been two years since the detention of Alexey Navalny. The regime has not contented itself with his imprisonment, but indulges in cruel and inhuman treatment, preventing Mr Navalny from access to necessary medical care, as described in an open letter published on 10 January that was signed by more than 600 medical professionals in Russia and was addressed to President Putin. We also deplore the continued detention of Vladimir Kara-Murza, Ilya Yashin and Alexey Gorinov, as well as the continued persecution of other Russian citizens who dare to speak up against the Kremlin's war of aggression against Ukraine. There are hundreds of others imprisoned in Russia for their political and civic activities and views, in clear violation of Russia's human rights and OSCE obligations.
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 country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and MONACO align themselves with this statement.

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