



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1376 Vienna, 2 June 2022

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

1. Mr. Chair, tomorrow, we will mark the grim milestone of 100 days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. 100 days of appalling atrocities committed by the Russian armed forces. 100 days of unspeakable suffering, but also 100 days of heroic resistance by the Ukrainian people against the invader. 100 days that have shattered the European security order, shaken our Organisation to the core and shocked the world, but also 100 days of unprecedented international solidarity and support to Ukraine in its just cause. However, we shall not forget that Russia's aggression against its peaceful neighbour started more than eight years ago with the illegal annexation of Crimea, which we have always condemned and do not recognise.
2. Every week in this room, we hear the Russian delegates unrepentantly trying to justify what they continue to call "a special military operation". However, their words will never change the truth: this is a war of aggression and Russia is the aggressor. There is no justification for this unprovoked war, neither in the present nor in the past.
3. Yesterday, we marked International Children's Day. At least 261 children in Ukraine did not live to see that day because of Russia's war. This includes a 5-month infant killed in the arms of his father in Kharkiv on 26 May. At least 460 children have been injured as a direct consequence of this war, up to now. Hundreds of thousands are traumatised, massively displaced, exposed to the risks of human trafficking and exploitation, sexual violence and child labour among others. Many boys and girls in Ukraine, and in Russia, have become orphans. This dire situation has also been confirmed by the report under the Moscow Mechanism fact-finding mission. In this regard, we deplore the recent decree by President Putin to simplify the Russian citizenship procedures for Ukrainian orphans.

4. Russia bears full responsibility for this war and its barbaric acts. Deliberate targeting of innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure, reported forcible deportations, attempts to subdue the peaceful and democratic neighbouring State of Ukraine by the use of force and constant disregard of human rights and humanitarian law are unacceptable. These actions blatantly violate international law, the UN Charter and the OSCE principles and commitments. There can be no impunity for war crimes or crimes against humanity. The European Union continues to support all efforts to ensure accountability, including actions taken within the OSCE, the UN and the International Criminal Court. Moreover, last week, the EU together with the United Kingdom and the United States, launched the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group. It will assist the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine in its investigation and prosecution of atrocity crimes.
5. After a failed attempt to capture Kyiv, the Russian army adopted scorched-earth tactics in the east of Ukraine, including the indiscriminate use of heavy weapons, thermobaric bombs and cluster munitions. As a result, whole cities and villages are being razed to the ground. We have seen it in Mariupol where 95 % of the city has been destroyed. This is now happening in Sievierodonetsk. It is high time for the Russian leadership to stop this war of aggression against Ukraine and put an end to this bloodshed.
6. We continue to closely monitor the situation of the Ukrainian servicemen evacuated from Mariupol. We underline once again that all prisoners of war, including those detained in Mariupol, must be treated according to IHL and humanely at all times and must not be subject to torture and ill-treatment.
7. We strongly condemn the continuing detention, harassment, and intimidation of OSCE SMM national staff in the territories temporarily under Russian military control. They are still under OSCE functional legal protection. We urge Russia to live up to its responsibilities as OSCE participating State and to ensure the immediate release of those remaining in detention and the termination of the media campaign against SMM.
8. We strongly condemn targeting by Russia of journalists and other media actors. They perform a critical role in providing information during a conflict and should not be a target. We are appalled by the news of the killing, this Monday, of the French journalist Frédéric

Leclerc-Imhoff. He was killed in Lysychansk by a shell shrapnel while covering a humanitarian evacuation operation. Another journalist - victim of Russia's war of aggression in the exercise of his professional duties.

9. Mr. Chair, Russia's blockade of the export of Ukraine's grain is having dire knock-on effects across the world, with the United Nations World Food Programme warning about a looming threat of famine. The allegations made last week by Russia in this room that the West wanted, by trying to urgently export grain from Ukraine to organise "not a mythical but a real Holodomor" are utterly repulsive, an insult to the memory of the victims of Holodomor and another deflection from the truth. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the cause for this situation. It is Russia that is stealing grain in Ukraine. The EU and its Member States, together with their partners, are supporting Ukraine in restoring its export capabilities so that the grain can reach people worldwide.
  
10. While Russia's war is raging in Ukraine, the Kremlin keeps tightening its systematic grip on any remnants of freedom inside Russia. There are worrying reports about internet access limitations. The Kremlin did not content itself with the dissolution of Memorial, now even its website is blocked in Russia. We are witnessing an exodus of Russian academia, triggered by restrictions on academic freedom and systematic intimidation of all those who publicly oppose Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war against Ukraine. We commend all those Russian citizens who dare to speak up in defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We stand in solidarity with the more than 15,000 Russians who have been detained for protesting against Russia's war; with Russian independent journalists and media actors, many of whom have been forced to leave Russia in order to continue their important work; and with Russian opposition politicians and activists, among them Vladimir Kara-Murza, who faces up to 15 years in prison for sharing information about Russia's war, and Alexei Navalny, whose politically motivated sentencing to 9 years in a strict-regime prison, based on dubious fraud charges, we continue to deplore. Today we mark 500 days since his imprisonment.
  
11. The European Union condemns Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We call on Russia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its

internationally recognised borders and to immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We also reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations. We will never recognise any illegal entities nor annexation of Ukraine's territory.

12. As Russia chooses to continue its war of aggression, the European Union will keep up its pressure, including through restrictive measures, to limit the Kremlin's ability to finance this senseless war.

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

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