



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1382 Vienna, 14 July 2022

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

1. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to cause tremendous suffering to millions of people. Deliberate targeting of innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure, the reported use of systematic gender-based violence as a weapon of war, attempts to subdue the peaceful and democratic neighbouring State of Ukraine by the use of force and constant disregard of international human rights and humanitarian law are unacceptable. Russia bears full responsibility for this war and the consequences of its despicable acts against the Ukrainian people. These actions blatantly violate international law, the UN Charter and the OSCE principles and commitments. Russia's actions, with the Belarusian regime's complicity, must stop now. Those responsible must and will be held accountable. There can be no impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocity crimes. The European Union continues to support efforts to ensure accountability, including actions taken within the OSCE, the UN and the International Criminal Court.
2. Meanwhile, international organisations continue to try to account for the dead and displaced: as of 12 July, the UN had verified over 11,000 civilian casualties in the country including some 5000 fatalities, noting that the actual figures are likely to be considerably higher. UNHCR has registered some 9 million people fleeing Ukraine as a result of Russia's invasion and IOM estimates that 6.2 million people are internally displaced. This amounts to 14% of the general population in Ukraine. On 9 July, Chasiv Yar was hit by Russian missiles and 34 bodies have been recovered from the wreckage of a residential building. On 11 July, in Kharkiv, 3 civilians were killed and 28 were wounded as Russia fired rockets over the city and in Mykolaiv, at least 12 civilians were injured due to Russian shelling. Deliberate targeting of civilians is completely unacceptable and we strongly condemn these actions by Russia.

3. Meanwhile, Russia is pursuing efforts to consolidate its hold over Ukrainian territories and to facilitate their integration into Russia. In this context, the EU strongly condemns the Russian Presidential decree expanding the simplified and selective procedure to obtain Russian citizenship for all Ukrainians. This is yet another attempt to undermine the sovereignty of Ukraine. The EU will not recognise these passports. The EU also strongly condemns the announcement by Russian puppet structures in Ukraine's Kherson region of a new illegal so-called "government" on 5 July, headed by a Russian official from the Kaliningrad region. Any attempts to alter the status of parts of Ukrainian territory are a clear violation of international law, the UN Charter and Ukraine's Constitution; they further undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and will not be recognised by the European Union.
4. We also condemn in the strongest possible terms the ongoing detention, abduction and kidnapping of Ukrainian journalists, civil society activists, local officials and other civilians by the Russian Armed Forces and their proxies. In addition, the reported forced deportations of Ukrainians to Russia, including through so-called "filtration camps" are gravely concerning. The taking of hostages and forcible transfer of civilians, including children, are prohibited under international humanitarian law, notably the Geneva Conventions.
5. We stress that Russia must respect the provisions of international humanitarian law, also concerning prisoners of war, which includes allowing access of international organisations to them and their places of captivity, in line with the Geneva Conventions. We condemn the death sentences handed to three foreign prisoners of war in the non-government controlled area of the Donetsk region of Ukraine. We remind that Maksym Butkevych, a prominent Ukrainian human rights defender and journalist, and all other prisoners of war must be treated fairly according to international standards.
6. We also strongly condemn the continuing detention 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 their immediate release.

7. It is deeply deplorable that Russia is blocking million tonnes of grains in Ukrainian storage facilities in a deliberate attempt to use food as a weapon of war, not only against Ukraine, but also against some of the most vulnerable countries in the world. Before the invasion, Ukraine supplied 12% of the planet's wheat, 15% of its corn and half of its sunflower oil. Russia is blocking of the exit routes for Ukraine's grain, including its Black Sea ports, deliberately targeting Ukraine's grain storage facilities and setting grain fields on fire, forcing the world into a worsening state of food insecurity. This is at a time when 43 million people are already one-step away from famine. We denounce Russia's propaganda campaign that attempts to blame the looming food crisis on EU sanctions. The EU and its Member States will continue supporting Ukraine in restoring its grain export capabilities to the global market.

8. The EU remains extremely concerned with the worsening situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula, as was presented by the OHCHR in a report to the UN Human Rights Council last week. In this context, we deplore yet another sentencing of the Crimean Tatars, Oleh Fedorov, Ernest Ibragimov and Ismet Ibragimov, to long-term imprisonment. We call on the Russian authorities to release all arbitrarily detained political prisoners, comply with international law and end all human rights violations and abuses in the illegally annexed peninsula.

9. While Russia's war is raging in Ukraine, the Kremlin continues to tighten its grip on any remnants of freedom within Russia, which is accompanied by a widespread systematic state-led manipulation and disinformation campaign about the war. It is deplorable that the Russian parliament introduced on 6 July harsh prison terms for calls to act against national security and criminal liability for those maintaining a so-called "confidential" cooperation with foreigners. We condemn the sentencing of Alexei Gorinov, a municipal councillor from Moscow, to seven years of imprisonment for criticising Russia's war against Ukraine. Censorship and oppression will not allow the Kremlin to hide the facts about Russia's unprovoked, illegal and unjustifiable invasion. We call on Russia to guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms for its own population, in line with its OSCE commitments as a participating State.

10. The European Union continues to condemn 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 stand with Ukraine.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE and the 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.