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EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1383
Vienna, 21 July 2022**

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

1. The European Union's stance on Russia's invasion of Ukraine remains unequivocal. We will not cease repeating the undeniable fact that this war blatantly violates international law, the UN Charter and the fundamental OSCE principles and commitments. No matter what euphemisms Russia and its representatives here and in other fora use, its real nature cannot be disguised. It is a brutal war of aggression, which has no place in the 21st century. No self-respecting state could ever recognise or legitimise this attempted territorial grab.
2. The indiscriminate and deliberate shelling of civilians and civilian infrastructure is a serious violation of international humanitarian law and it constitutes a war crime. The EU is appalled and condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent wave of bombing Ukraine with Russian missiles fired from a safe distance, deliberately targeting civilian objects with no military value. We still remember the horrors of Kremenchuk when Russian missiles hit a shopping mall in the middle of the day, killing more than 20 people. Last week, the world was shocked again seeing the heart-breaking pictures from Vinnytsia. Missiles, fired from a Russian submarine in the Black Sea, killed 23 people and wounded more than 90. Among those dead were 4 year-old Lisa, 7-year old Maxim and 8-year old Kyrill. Three more children added to the long list of the innocent victims of the Russian aggression.
3. The Vinnytsia attack was another reminder of the atrocious character of Russia's senseless war of aggression. But not an isolated one. Mykolaiv, Odesa, Bakhmut,

Kramatorsk, Nikopol, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Chuhuiv - these are some of the Ukrainian cities shelled by Russia in the past week alone. The shelling of Mykolaiv on 15 July seriously damaged two universities, which cannot be rebuilt before the start of the new academic year. The EU strongly condemns all attacks on civilians, including journalists, media actors and medical personnel, as well as on civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools and other educational institutions and cultural heritage sites in Ukraine.

4. If Russia's intention is to terrorise Ukrainians and to weaken the resolve of Ukraine's partners, we are convinced that such brutality and recklessness will have the opposite effect. We remain strongly committed to providing further political, financial and humanitarian support as well as military assistance to help Ukraine exercise its inherent right of self-defence against the Russian aggression.

5. Mr Chair, as the Russian war of aggression rages on, the EU and its Member States will continue to provide protection to those seeking shelter. Since women and children are especially vulnerable, it is of utmost importance to protect them against gender-based violence, trafficking and other forms of exploitation, as required by international humanitarian law. This is a duty that falls in particular on the occupation forces. We look forward to the report of the CiO Special Representative on Gender later today and thank her for her activities for enhanced gender-sensitive policies and on monitoring the plight of Ukrainian women refugees.

6. There can be no impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocity crimes. We welcome and support the ongoing work to investigate any allegations or evidence of violations of international humanitarian law that may amount to such crimes committed in Ukraine. The OSCE has also an important tool at its disposal in this regard, namely the Expert Missions under the Moscow Mechanism. All EU Member States were among those 45 participating States invoking the Moscow Mechanism to gather information on the violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law during the ongoing Russian invasion. The second report presented in the Council last week confirmed the conclusions of the first Mission. It showed the clear patterns of serious violations of international

humanitarian law attributable mostly to the Russian Armed Forces. The Russian Armed Forces continue to disregard their fundamental obligation to comply with the basic principles of international humanitarian law: distinction, proportionality and precaution. Last week, the EU and most EU Member States also took part at the recent Ukraine Accountability Conference in The Hague, to pledge their support and to work together on investigations into international crimes committed in Ukraine.

7. Mr. Chair, Russia will be held accountable for failing to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian law in the territories of Ukraine under its temporary military control. This also applies to the treatment of prisoners of war and forced deportations. Ukrainians, notably children, forcibly removed to Russia, must be immediately allowed to return safely. The EU is appalled by reports of death of a British national, Paul Uray, whilst in custody. We reiterate that the three OSCE SMM national staff detained in non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions for engaging in their official duties as OSCE staff must be released immediately and unconditionally. We deplore that they are unjustifiably held in conditions unknown to their families, condemn the so-called “legal” proceedings initiated against them and recall that they still enjoy their functional protection as OSCE staff.

8. Last week, we condemned the Russian Presidential decree expanding the simplified and selective procedure to obtain Russian citizenship for all Ukrainians. This new Russian legislation is yet another flagrant attack on Ukrainian sovereignty and international law, linked to Russia’s illegal war. The Kremlin is thereby also exporting its societal model on foreign territory. A model that denies citizens their human rights and fundamental freedoms. We have seen this recently in Russia with the criminal cases against the opposition politicians Vladimir Kara-Murza and Ilya Yashin, who have spoken out against Russia’s brutal war of aggression. We saw it last week in the sentencing of opposition politician Andrei Pivovarov, former leader of “Open Russia”, to four years in prison under the law of so-called “undesirable organisations”. We also see the same societal model played out in the Kremlin’s systematic crackdown on independent media; the case of TV Rain (Dozhd) is one of many examples of the Russian independent media outlets forced to flee censorship and repression and seek freedom outside Russia. This Monday, TV Rain relaunched its

broadcasting in Russian and to Russian audiences from Amsterdam, Paris, Riga and Tbilisi. We urge Russia to respect its human rights commitments, to roll back its legislation on “foreign agents”, “undesirable organisations” as well as the so-called “law on fake news”, and immediately release all political prisoners.

9. The European Union urges once again 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 will never recognise any illegal entities nor annexation of Ukraine’s territory. We also reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations.

We continue to 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.