



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council 1386 Vienna, 24 August 2022

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

1. Today, Ukraine celebrates the 31st anniversary of its independence from the Soviet Union. It is a day to celebrate Ukraine's unique and distinct history, culture and language. And it is a day to remind Russia that Ukraine, as a sovereign, free and independent State, has the inherent right to make its own decision on foreign policy and its security arrangements in accordance with international law and the Helsinki Final Act. Bearing this in mind, we congratulate Ukraine and the Ukrainian people for their heroic fight against the unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression launched by the Russian Federation. The European Union will continue to stand by Ukraine as it defends its territorial integrity and sovereignty against the Russian aggression.
2. Today also marks the sixth month of the beginning of Russia's unprecedented full-scale attack on Ukraine, on OSCE principles and commitments as well as on international law. At this very moment, Russia is continuing its intense and brutal shelling of civilians and civilian infrastructure on a daily basis in a number of regions, such as Donetsk, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia and Sumy. At least 42 civilians were killed in Russian attacks during the last week, including 19 people in massive missile attacks on Kharkiv and its region during the early hours of 18 August. Dozens of people have also been wounded while residential buildings and educational institutions, as well as transport, energy and other critical infrastructure, have been deliberately destroyed.
3. We also continue to receive further deeply worrying reports from the Ukrainian areas currently under temporary Russian military control. A Mariupol city official recently estimated that over 50 000 civilians have been killed in the city as a result of the Russian unprovoked military aggression and about 22 000 people are buried in mass graves in

the vicinity of the city. Russia should have no illusions: anyone responsible for abuses and violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity will be held to account. There are numerous reports that will provide the basis for such legal proceedings, including the two Mission reports under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism and the recent interim ODIHR report. All reports testify of the grave breaches of the fundamental rules and principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by the Russian Armed Forces. We will spare no efforts until justice prevails.

4. We are also deeply concerned about reports of forcible deportation of Ukrainians, including children, to Russia by the Russian Armed Forces. The same goes for Russia's abhorrent practices in the so-called "filtration camps" where families are separated, and those who are deemed "unreliable" disappear. Torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments or punishments as well as enforced disappearances are prohibited under international law, in particular international humanitarian law, and will be prosecuted.
5. Furthermore, we again urge Russia to ensure that the three local OSCE staff members detained in non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine are immediately and unconditionally released. We also remind Russia that all prisoners of war have the right to a fair trial in compliance with international humanitarian law.
6. The European Union remains deeply concerned about Russia's military activities in and around Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and condemns this serious and irresponsible breach of international law. We urge Russia to immediately cede control of the power plant to its rightful sovereign owner, Ukraine. In addition, IAEA experts must be granted free and unrestricted access to the facility to address nuclear safety, security and safeguard concerns in a manner that fully respects Ukrainian sovereignty over its territory and infrastructure.
7. Mr. Chair, more than 8 years have passed since Russia started its aggression against Ukraine by covertly deploying soldiers without insignia to the Crimean peninsula and organising an illegal referendum. Yesterday, this was discussed at the second summit

of the International Crimea Platform hosted by the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The European Union continues to condemn and not recognise the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. Equally, we condemn Russia's intensified militarisation of the Crimean peninsula, turning the peninsula into a springboard for further military aggression. Since the illegal annexation, the residents of the Crimean peninsula, in particular indigenous Crimean Tatars, face systematic restrictions of their fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, religion or belief and association and the right to peaceful assembly. Journalists, human rights defenders and lawyers face interference and intimidation in their work.

8. In the same way as was done in the Crimean peninsula in 2014, Russia is now aiming to prepare for illegal and orchestrated "referenda" on joining the Russian Federation in areas currently under Russian military control, such as the Kherson region. The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms any attempts by Russia to forcefully and illegally integrate or annex parts of Ukraine's territory. Such attempts by the Kremlin and its proxies represent a blatant violation of international law, the Ukrainian constitution and Ukrainian sovereignty. The result of any orchestrated and illegitimate vote will not be recognised by the international community and will be met with a unified response.
9. On a final note, we categorically reject and strongly condemn the reprehensibly cynical attempts we see in Russian state-run media and by diplomats in this and other international fora and often on social media to justify or whitewash Russia's brutal and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine by spreading disinformation and propaganda. The European Union calls 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.

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