



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1414 Vienna, 9 March 2023

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

1. Mr. Chair, in the early hours of the 2nd of March, there was another Russian missile strike on a multi-story residential building in the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia. At least 13 people were killed, including an 8-month old girl, and dozens of others were seriously injured. Earlier this morning, Russia launched yet another wave of missile attacks across Ukraine causing civilian deaths and destruction. We are also concerned about the alarming reports regarding the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant – as just mentioned by the Ukrainian Ambassador, the ZNPP has reportedly lost its last electrical grid connection line. The deliberate targeting of innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure and the reported use of systematic sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war, of forced displacement of Ukrainian citizens, including children, and of torture and ill treatment, as well as the constant disregard of international human rights and humanitarian law, are unacceptable patterns of Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, aiming to undermine Ukraine's statehood and identity.
2. We recall that one year ago, we started receiving the first horrifying reports from the suburbs of Ukraine's capital Kyiv, as well as from Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Kherson, Mariupol and other major Ukrainian cities that Russia attempted to capture. The real magnitude of Russian atrocities began to be revealed after the liberation of territories previously under Russian control. In those parts of Ukraine still under illegal Russian occupation, such as Mariupol, the scale of the human tragedy is staggering, with reported massive and systematic abuses of human rights and repression of the local population.

3. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms these heinous acts, as well as Russia's persisting attacks against Ukraine's critical infrastructure, residential and medical facilities, schools, and cultural sites. We are also shocked by the recently reported mistreatment and video-recorded execution of a Ukrainian PoW by Russian forces, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law.
4. The EU is firmly committed to holding to account all commanders, perpetrators and accomplices of war crimes and other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU fully supports Ukraine's and the international community's efforts in this respect, including the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for the prosecution of the crime of aggression, which is of concern to the international community as a whole. In this context, we welcome the International Conference "United for Justice" organised in Lviv on 3-5 March, and the agreement to establish the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression (ICPA) against Ukraine. This Centre will be linked to the existing Joint Investigation Team supported by Eurojust.
5. Protecting Ukraine's critical infrastructure and ensuring Ukraine's resilience to withstand Russia's malign actions is key. We remain committed to continue supporting Ukraine to exercise its inherent right to self-defence against Russia's war of aggression and liberate its territories and its people, including by stepping up the bilateral provision of support, such as air defence capacities and demining assistance. The European Union, together with partners, is also stepping up its work towards the use of frozen and immobilised Russian assets in accordance with EU and international law for Ukraine's reconstruction and for the purposes of reparation.
6. Mr. Chair, the Kremlin's propaganda and disinformation so actively spread in public fora and through its media outlets and diplomatic channels, including this Organisation, is not credible. Russia is working hard through disinformation campaigns to depict itself as a victim that is allegedly threatened by other countries. Let us be crystal clear: Russia is the aggressor State that is persistently and blatantly violating international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian

law. Russia continues its desperate attempts to weaken Ukraine's morale and its supporters' resolve. In vain.

7. We also condemn Russia's latest provocative rhetoric towards the Republic of Moldova aiming at destabilisation and we commend the restrained approach of the Moldovan authorities. The EU reiterates its unwavering support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognised borders.
8. The EU reiterates its support for President Zelenskyy's initiative for a just peace. Any diplomatic solution needs to be based on full respect of international law and its principles, including those enshrined in the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter. Regrettably, we have not seen to date any willingness on Russia's side to cease its hostilities, withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine, and work towards a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace. The Kremlin is only repeating its ultimatums and doubling down on its aggression. Russia must abandon its goal of subjugating Ukraine and undermining its statehood and independence.
9. We reiterate our call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained OSCE staff members, and to return all OSCE SMM armoured vehicles to their legitimate owner, all OSCE participating States. We fully support all OSCE efforts in this regard.
10. We reaffirm our demand that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraws 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 stop enabling Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, by permitting Russian armed forces to use Belarusian territory and by providing support and training to the Russian military. The Belarusian authorities must fully abide by their obligations under international law. The EU will continue to respond to all actions supporting Russia's unlawful and unjustified war of aggression and remains ready to move quickly with further restrictive measures against Belarus.

11. The people of Ukraine, rightly and bravely defending their homeland and their freedom, will prevail. The EU will stand in solidarity with Ukraine, which is exercising its inherent right to self-defence, for as long as it takes. We will continue providing Ukraine with political, humanitarian, financial, legal and military support against Russia's illegal war of aggression. Ukraine belongs to our European family.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and 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.

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