



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No.1434 Vienna, 20 July 2023

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

1. Mr. Chair, let me start by congratulating Ukraine on the Day of the Adoption of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine, celebrated on 16 July. The European Union stands united and in full solidarity with Ukraine and its people, who are defending their country, its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within Ukraine's internationally recognised borders. They set a remarkable example of courage, determination and resilience.
2. On the other side, Russia's Armed Forces and their proxies continue terrorising Ukrainian civilians with daily attacks against Ukrainian cities and critical civilian infrastructure. We strongly condemn the most recent aerial strikes against residential areas of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Mykolaiv and other Ukrainian cities. Intentionally directing attacks on civilians and civilian objects amounts to war crimes. Russia will not escape accountability for any war crimes and other serious international crimes committed, including for the crime of aggression.
3. The human rights situation in parts of Ukraine's territories temporarily and illegally occupied by Russia remains of grave concern. International monitoring mechanisms, including the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the UN Commission of Inquiry, as well as the relevant OSCE Moscow Mechanism and ODIHR reports, have concluded that Russian authorities have committed a wide range of violations of international

humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine. The reported violations include indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, a widespread and systematic pattern of summary executions, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, and unlawful confinement, as well as inhumane detention conditions, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as forced transfer and deportation, including of children. Many of these acts amount to war crimes. As outlined in the most recent report of the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine some may also amount to crimes against humanity. The latest ODIHR monitoring report, released a few days ago, found further evidence that Russian Armed Forces continued to routinely use explosive weapons with wide area effects in their attacks on densely populated urban areas of Ukraine, leading to numerous civilian casualties, as well as extensive damage and destruction of civilian objects..

4. We all need to respect our obligations under international law. In light of the aforementioned reports, we reiterate our call on Russia to uphold its international humanitarian law and international human rights law obligations. Its practice of forcibly issuing Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens is in blatant violation of international law and undermines Ukraine's sovereignty. Russia must also stop repressions against the local population, and immediately and unconditionally release all those arbitrarily and illegally detained in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the OSCE staff members. The ICRC must be granted full and unconditional access to all detained persons without further delay. The recent decision by the Russian Central Election Commission to hold so-called 'elections' in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine is yet another violation of international law.
5. The EU condemns unequivocally Russia's decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative. With this decision, Russia is further exacerbating the global food security crisis that it created through its war of aggression

against Ukraine, by continuing to deliberately weaponise food. This will put millions of the most vulnerable people at even greater risk. Since August 2022, the BSGI has helped to revive grain shipments from Ukraine's Black Sea ports, contributing to a global reduction in food prices and easing the burden for some of the world's most food-insecure countries. Russia must cease illegally blocking Ukrainian seaports and allow freedom of navigation on the Black Sea. The EU will spare no efforts to continue to support the timely and stable delivery of all goods, especially agricultural products, to global markets through EU-Ukraine "Solidarity Lanes". The EU will continue to work with affected partner countries in its comprehensive Team Europe response to address global food insecurity, and support all efforts towards the resumption of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

6. Mr. Chair, at this point, there can be no ambiguity about who the aggressor is. We categorically reject and strongly condemn the cynical attempts by Russian officials, including within the OSCE, to distort facts, justify and whitewash Russia's brutal and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine by spreading disinformation and war propaganda. There will be no impunity for Russia's illegal actions and deliberate destruction in Ukraine. As enshrined in the UN Charter, Ukraine has the right to self-defence against Russia's war of aggression in order to liberate and regain full control of all territories illegally occupied by Russia within its internationally recognised borders. Ukraine also has the right to seek international support for these efforts. The EU and Members States stand ready, together with partners, to help Ukraine defend itself in the long term, deter acts of aggression and resist destabilisation efforts. Our collective support will not only serve as a security guarantee for Ukraine, but will also restore peace and security.

7. The EU supports a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the UN Charter and in full respect of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We reiterate our support for President Zelenskyy's initiative for a

just peace. We will continue working with Ukraine on its 10-point peace plan. The OSCE also has relevant tools, experience, and capacities to meaningfully contribute to relevant international efforts in this regard.

8. The EU condemns the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression provided by the Belarusian authorities. It urges all countries not to provide material or other support for Russia's war of aggression.
9. The EU reiterates its unwavering support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We demand that Russia ceases its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and withdraws all its military forces, proxies, and equipment, unconditionally and entirely, from the whole territory of Ukraine. Russia must also immediately cease actions endangering the safety and security of civilian nuclear facilities in Ukraine.

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.