



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council 1424 Vienna, 25 May 2023

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

1. Since the beginning of May, Russia has been ruthlessly attacking Kyiv, and many other Ukrainian cities with nearly daily indiscriminate missile and drone attacks, which are prohibited under international humanitarian law. Often attacking in the middle of the night, Russia employs different types of missiles, including ballistic ones, in an attempt to exhaust Ukraine's air defence systems and people – in vain. Unable to achieve any significant gains on the battlefield and unable to break Ukraine's resolve to defend itself against Russia's full-scale invasion, the Kremlin is again resorting to deplorable tactics of terrorising Ukrainian civilians. Russia must immediately cease these heinous attacks. We remain firmly committed to holding all those responsible to account.
2. Despite the existential threat they are facing, the Ukrainian people stand united and determined to defend their country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as never before. They know what they are fighting and sacrificing their lives for. We deeply admire the heroism and courage of the Ukrainian people, who have been resisting Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression for over 15 months. As emphasised during the G7 Hiroshima Summit, which President Zelenskyy also attended, we will continue to stand with Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes for Ukraine to rightfully defend itself against Russia's brutal war of aggression and to restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. To that end, we will continue providing Ukraine with necessary long-term political, financial, economic, humanitarian, legal and military support.

3. At the same time, as reiterated in Hiroshima, together with partners, we will increase our collective pressure on Russia. This will involve imposing further sanctions and measures to increase the costs to Russia and those who are supporting its war effort, and closing the loopholes that allow circumvention of the existing ones. Additionally, we are taking steps to support partners worldwide in alleviating the suffering caused by Russia's war, including through humanitarian assistance. We are also building on the success of our efforts to ensure that Russia is no longer able to weaponise energy supply against us and against the world.
4. Together with partners, the EU will also continue exploring ways of using Russia's frozen and immobilised assets for Ukraine's reconstruction and reparation purposes, in accordance with EU and international law. The principle of the "aggressor pays the damage" must be upheld.
5. The EU also condemns Belarus for its continued military support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. With its war, Russia is flagrantly violating the most fundamental rules, norms and principles of international law, including those enshrined in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. We urge all countries not to provide any material or other support to Russia's war of aggression.
6. The EU reiterates its support for President Zelenskyy's initiative for a just peace. We will continue working with Ukraine on the 10-point peace plan. Any diplomatic solution to end Russia's illegal war of aggression must be based on full respect for international law and its rules, norms, and principles, including those enshrined in the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Paris Charter.
7. Last Friday, here in Hofburg, the EU, together with the delegations of Ukraine and the US, organised another meeting with Ukrainian witnesses of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Some of these persons had been held as civilian hostages by Russia. Listening to their testimonies was a harrowing experience. We deplore Russia's systematic practice of mistreating Ukrainian POWs and civilian hostages, both in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and in Russia. We call on Russia to ensure

that all Ukrainians in Russian captivity are treated in full compliance with international humanitarian law. This includes granting the ICRC full, immediate, and unconditional access to all POWs. We demand the immediate release of all those unlawfully deprived of their liberty, including Serhiy Ofitserov, Serhiy Kovalskiy, Yuriy Kayov, Kostiantyn Reznik, Serhiy Kabakov, Denys Lialka, and Serhiy Heydt. These individuals are currently detained in Moscow's Lefortovo Pretrial Detention Centre and are facing fabricated charges carrying sentences of 10 to 20 years. We also reiterate our call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained OSCE staff members.

8. As Russia continues its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, the Russian authorities' crackdown on civil society and individual citizens also continues to intensify. We deplore the Russian prosecutors' request for a 12-year prison sentence for Liliya Chanyшева, a former regional coordinator for Alexei Navalny's organisation in Ufa. No one should be punished for exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of opinion, expression or association. We call on the Russian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release her and all others unjustly imprisoned. We are also alarmed by the recent police raids in Perm on the homes of members of the Center of Historic Memory, the successor to the NGO Memorial. Russia must immediately stop human rights violations and fulfil its international obligations and commitments.
9. The EU reiterates its unwavering support for 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 immediately withdraws all its military forces, proxies, and equipment, unconditionally and entirely, from the whole territory of Ukraine. Russia started this war and must put an end to this war – now.

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.