



EUROPEAN UNION

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

Mr Chair, the European Union and its Member States **reiterate their strongest condemnation of Russia's ongoing premeditated, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine. This full-scale war**, today in its 385th day, is **unambiguous in its illegality, injustice and brutality**. Russia's actions constitute a flagrant violation of international law, and of the core rules, principles and commitments on which European security is built - the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris. They go against everything that matters to all of us, including the respect for human lives and human dignity.

No one can remain indifferent to the senseless suffering that Russia has inflicted upon the Ukrainian people – the countless lives lost, extensive physical and mental traumas, millions of displaced persons, deportations and forced transfers of children to Russia, sexual and gender-based violence, and deliberate, large-scale destruction of civilian infrastructure. Last week, Russia launched another wave of its missile and drone attacks across Ukraine, killing at least nine civilians and injuring many more. These despicable strikes, which terrorise the civilian population, are abhorrent and must be stopped and accounted for. But they also demonstrate Russia's fundamental underestimation of the Ukrainian people's resilience and determination to resist aggression, to defend their homeland and to fight for their freedom and sovereignty.

The **treatment of prisoners of war** is further testimony of the inhumanity of Russian troops. We were shocked by the recent footage of the execution of a Ukrainian prisoner of war Oleksandr Matsievsky who defied his captors in the last moments of life with the symbolically defiant words "Slava Ukraini". We call on Russia to respect international

humanitarian law without exception. In this context, we recall that paragraphs 29 and 30 of the **OSCE Code of Conduct** prescribe **training in international humanitarian law a basic requirement** for all members of the armed forces.

Given the reported atrocities the Russian forces have committed in Ukraine, it is essential to **ensure full accountability for war crimes and other most serious crimes**, including **the crime of aggression**. All perpetrators, including the involved military commanders, as well as those responsible must be held accountable for their decisions and actions. **Those ordering, committing and supporting crimes must know they cannot act with impunity.**

Mr Chair, **Ukraine is exercising its inherent right of self-defence**, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations in order to protect its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The resilience of the Ukrainian people, their inspirational courage and their stirring resolve are unbroken. No amount of Russian propaganda can change this.

The **European Union has stood with Ukraine from the earliest hours** of these testing times. We have been providing political, military, humanitarian and financial support. And **we will continue doing so for as long as it takes**. We have also introduced, in cooperation with our partners, unprecedented, extensive and wide-ranging sanctions in order to thwart Russia's war of aggression. We do this to uphold the rules-based international order to which we all, including Russia, have agreed. It is crucial for our common security in the OSCE area and beyond to protect every country's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

Mr Chair, we cannot forget that the Russian aggression against Ukraine began more **than nine years ago when it covertly used its military to seize Ukrainian territory by force** and then attempted to give its actions a veneer of legitimacy with **a sham referendum in the Crimean peninsula**. This so-called "referendum", exactly nine years ago tomorrow, conducted at gunpoint, can never be regarded as legitimate. We do not and will not recognise this illegal annexation of the territory of a sovereign State. Crimea is Ukraine. Needless to say that Russia's attempts to repeat the same playbook last September with regard to other regions of Ukraine turned out to be another farce and embarrassment for Russia. This was underscored by the UNGA Resolution of

October 2022 where an overwhelming majority of 143 states condemned the annexations as invalid and illegal under international law.

In conclusion, **we urge Russia to stop its war of aggression** and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We also **urge the Belarusian authorities to stop their support** of and refrain from any further involvement in or facilitation of Russia's illegal war of aggression.

Thank you!

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, the EFTA countries NORWAY, ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well ANDORRA 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.