



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1398 Vienna, 10 November 2022

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

1. While Russia is continuing its brutal, premeditated and illegal war of aggression against a peaceful neighbouring state, Ukraine is preparing to live through the winter. With Russia's continuous cynical and reprehensible missile and drone strikes on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, about 40% of its energy supply sources have been seriously damaged. Ukrainian authorities have therefore been forced to step up their contingency planning to prepare and protect the civilian population, also in case of total blackouts. The EU and its Member States will continue supporting Ukraine's civilian resilience and providing necessary emergency assistance in this regard.
2. In addition, the Russian Armed Forces show no respect for their obligations under international humanitarian law, with regard to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. We receive concerning reports of looting in territories temporarily held under Russian military control where members of the Russian Armed Forces are stealing property critical to municipal infrastructure, such as water supply and gas distribution companies, as well as ambulances and firefighters' vehicles, and transfer it to Russia. The reported Russian order to evacuate medical facilities in the temporarily under Russian military control Kherson region, including the removal of equipment, medical personnel and patients and the interruption of their functioning, is also deeply concerning.
3. There is no doubt that Russia's actions in Ukraine need to be investigated as possible war crimes and that any identified perpetrators must be held accountable thereafter. International humanitarian law is clear: deliberately targeting civilians and civilian objects constitutes war crimes. The EU reiterates its determination to ensure that there is no

impunity for any war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocity crimes committed during Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

4. Mr Chair, food and hunger should never be used as a weapon of war. Yet, Russia has deliberately exacerbated the global food security crisis by destroying or looting Ukrainian stocks of grain, disrupting production, imposing quota restrictions on its own export of foodstuff and fertilisers, and had imposed a blockade of Ukrainian seaports. In this vein, the Black Sea Grain Initiative is key to get food to the world's most vulnerable. We urge Russia to renew the agreement beyond its current period ending on 19 November and we call on Russia to implement the UN Black Sea Grain Initiative in good faith. The EU and its Member States will continue to respond to the global food security crisis and support timely and stable delivery of Ukrainian agricultural products to global markets.
5. This week, world leaders gather for the COP27 meeting in Egypt to discuss strategies to fight climate change. Yet, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is clouding our hopes for ambitious results. Russia's ruthless behaviour to exploit energy as a weapon of war is affecting people in Ukraine, but also elsewhere. Its aggressive attacks are damaging and destroying Ukrainian infrastructure and risk leading to an environmental disaster by the pollution of groundwater and the Black Sea.
6. What is more, Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric is unacceptable and the attacks of the Russian Armed Forces at and near Ukraine's nuclear facilities is significantly increasing the risk of a nuclear incident or accident, with potentially severe adverse consequences. Unfortunately, the crisis situation persists around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant that Russia illegally controls and we urge Russia to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the premises and to return control over the power plant to the Ukrainian authorities. We repeat that the IAEA has found no evidence of any so-called 'dirty bomb' nor other undeclared nuclear activities and materials in Ukraine, which makes any claims in this regard fundamentally baseless.
7. Russia's external aggression is mirrored by a systematic and drastic internal repression against its own population. Freedom of expression and academic freedom have

practically ceased to exist in Russia as shown by the example of Mr Denis Skopin, an associate professor at St. Petersburg State University, who was dismissed after participating in a rally on 21 September against the mobilisation. Moreover, the remnants of what once was Russian democracy are in freefall. This is evidenced by critical voices being prosecuted and sentenced to long prison sentences based on the so-called “Fake News” legislation, by decisions to close down independent media and civil society organisations and by further pressing arbitrary and politically motivated charges for alleged terrorism against opposition leader Alexey Navalny, apparently to serve as a warning to other potential political opponents. Furthermore, recently proposed amendments to the law against the so-called “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations”, whereby the definition of “propaganda” would be amended to include openly stating and considering same-sex couples as “normal”, risk further endangering members of the Russian LGBTIQ+ community. Following these developments, Russia has turned into a country from which citizens strive to flee or renounce their citizenship. We condemn Russia’s continued crackdown on the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and call on Russia to immediately cease its oppressive behaviour and return to observing international law and OSCE commitments.

8. Mr Chair, the Russian Federation has morally and politically already lost this war, and is increasingly losing on the battlefield. Yet, Russia seems to lack the decency to end the war it has started. The message from the European Union is unequivocal: we condemn Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and urge Russia to immediately stop its illegal aggression. We 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, including the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We remain unwavering in our support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In addition, we urge the Belarusian authorities to refrain from any further involvement in Russia’s illegal war of aggression against Ukraine as well as to immediately stop providing military support and allowing its territory to serve as a launchpad for attacks against Ukraine, which is an aggression in itself. We reiterate that any further actions and, in particular, any direct involvement of the Belarusian

military in Russia's war of aggression will be met by new and strong restrictive measures.

We will continue to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes.

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