



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No.1438 Vienna, 7 September 2023

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

1. The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its people. For more than eighteen months now, Russia has continued its relentless shelling of civilians and civilian infrastructure on a daily basis in various Ukrainian regions. Yesterday, another barbaric Russian attack on Kostyantynivka's central market in Ukraine's Donetsk region resulted in the deaths of more than 16 innocent civilians, including a child, and left many more wounded.
2. We also strongly condemn Russia's continued targeted attacks against Ukraine's grain storage facilities and port infrastructure, not only in the Black Sea but also on the Danube, in an attempt to disrupt Ukraine's ability to export food. Russia's deliberate decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative threatens to undermine global food security and safety of navigation. Hundreds of millions of people in already vulnerable situations, particularly in Africa, are put at risk because of Russia's irresponsible decision, and its continuing attacks. We call on Russia to stop weaponising food, which has profound global implications. The right to food is a human right and hunger must never be used as a political tool. The EU and its Member States will continue to address food insecurity caused by Russia's war of aggression, including through the EU Solidarity Lanes.
3. Russia's ongoing war of aggression is causing a devastating impact on the lives and aspirations of children in Ukraine. The start of a new school year for Ukraine's schoolchildren has been hindered by Russia's war, violating

their right to education. Despite the repeated Russian claims of targeting only military sites, we note with dismay that, according to UNICEF, thousands of schools across Ukraine have been damaged or destroyed by Russia, with many not deemed safe and eligible to reopen.

4. Furthermore, increasing evidence, including in the Moscow Mechanism report, indicates that Russia employs forcible transfer, re-education, and, in certain instances, the adoption of Ukrainian children as integral elements of its systematic efforts to subdue Ukraine's distinct identity, history, and culture. Russia's practice of forcibly transferring and deporting Ukrainian children is severely violates international humanitarian law, and the UN Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine concluded that it amounts to war crimes. We condemn in the strongest terms Russia's unlawful deportation and transfer to Russia and to Belarus of Ukrainian children and other civilians. We call on the Russian Federation and Belarus to immediately ensure their safe return.
5. Russia's political and military leadership will not escape accountability for any war crimes and other international crimes committed, including for the crime of aggression. Due to legal obligations under international law, Russia must also pay compensation for all the damage inflicted on Ukraine in the context of its war of aggression.
6. According to reports, early voting has started in illegal so-called 'elections' within temporarily and illegally occupied Ukrainian territories by Russia. The EU strongly condemns Russia's futile attempts to give a veneer of legitimacy to its forcible and illegal annexation or integration of Ukrainian sovereign territory. This constitutes yet another blatant violation of international law and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we will never recognise such actions. Crimea, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, Luhansk are and will always be Ukraine!
7. The EU remains extremely concerned with the worsening situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We call on the Russian authorities to release all arbitrarily detained political prisoners, end the persecution of Crimean Tatars, comply

with international law and end all human rights violations and abuses in the illegally annexed peninsula.

8. Furthermore, we call on Russia to immediately cease its systematic mistreatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian hostages in the temporarily and illegally occupied territory of Ukraine and in Russia. We demand the immediate release of all individuals unlawfully deprived of their liberty, including the three arbitrarily detained OSCE staff members. Russia must ensure that all Ukrainians in Russian captivity are treated in full compliance with international humanitarian law.
9. The EU supports a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the UN Charter in full respect of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We reiterate our support for President Zelensky's initiative for a just peace – the Peace Formula. We will continue working with Ukraine on the Peace Formula, including on ensuring the widest possible international support for its key principles and objectives. As demonstrated by the meetings of National Security Advisers in Copenhagen and Jeddah and the ongoing process in Kyiv, there is growing interest in the Peace Formula from many global partners. This is the only peace plan currently discussed in international fora. The upcoming UNGA High Level Week will constitute an important opportunity to further advance discussions with global partners.
10. The EU reiterates its unwavering support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU condemns the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression provided by the Belarusian authorities. We call on Russia to immediately stop its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and withdraw 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.
11. The EU remains strongly committed to assisting Ukraine to uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to rightfully defend itself against the

Russian aggressor. The European Council has granted the status of candidate country to Ukraine. The EU, along with 20 EU Member States so far, has signed the G7 multilateral declaration of support for Ukraine and stands ready to offer Ukraine long-term security commitments. We will continue providing comprehensive political, financial, legal, humanitarian and military support. These are clear signs of the EU's unwavering commitment to support Ukraine in building its own peaceful, democratic and prosperous future within the European family. The EU stands with Ukraine, and we will continue to do so for as long as it takes.

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.