



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council No. 1370 Vienna, 22 April 2022

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

1. The European Union thanks the Polish Chairmanship for convening this Special PC against the backdrop of Russia's continued brutal aggression against Ukraine in blatant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and fundamental OSCE principles. It is deeply regrettable that despite all the condemnations from the international community and calls on Russia to end the war, Russia is renewing its aggression.
2. Ukraine is currently being struck by the most intensive missile attacks by the Russian Federation in weeks and a series of land offensives have been launched in eastern and southern Ukraine. This includes particularly brutal attacks on cities including Severodonetsk, Lysychansk and Popasna where the Russian Armed Forces are striking civilians and civilian infrastructure with heavy artillery, multiple launch rocket systems and missiles. Kharkiv and its suburbs are under constant shelling and there are reports on the use of cluster munition against the city. Missile strikes are reported in Odesa, Mykolaiv and Ternopil, apparently also targeting civilian objects and infrastructure, as well as fuel storages and industry. Attacks on Lviv and other cities in western Ukraine show that no part of the country is being spared. Attacks are ongoing in the Zaporizhia region and Mariupol remains besieged, with constant heavy fighting and shelling and more than 100,000 people remaining in the city. We recall with horror the bombing of the Kramatorsk railway station, claiming over 50 civilian lives including five children, and the horrifying massacre that the Russian Armed Forces have committed in Bucha, Borodianska, Irpin, Hostomel and other places. Yet, Putin's awarding of an honorary title to the Russian brigade accused of committing the atrocities in Bucha shows that torturing, raping and killing innocent civilians, including

children, is a deliberate aim of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Such crimes must never be repeated. International humanitarian and human rights law must be fully respected.

3. The European Union condemns Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We demand that Russia immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We also reiterate our call on the co-aggressor, Belarus, to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations. We strongly urge Russia to urgently facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians and to provide safe pathways, first and foremost in Mariupol, but also in other cities of Ukraine, both for civilians to evacuate to other parts of Ukraine.
4. The EU supports efforts by international bodies, including the OSCE and the OHCHR, in the gathering of evidence and documentation of the atrocities of the war, and we welcome the tireless efforts and contributions of civil society and human rights defenders to this end. We appreciated the report presented to the Permanent Council under the Moscow Mechanism last week. The report depicted the appalling and devastating reality of clear patterns of violations of international humanitarian law and gross and systematic violations of human rights by the Russian Armed Forces. Human rights including the right to life, prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, have been blatantly violated in a widespread or systematic way in the areas under the effective control of Russia or entities under overall control of Russia. According to the report, such violations are likely to qualify as crimes against humanity. Let us be clear: we will spare no effort to hold those responsible for these violations of international law, as well as their executors on the ground, accountable for their actions.
5. We strongly condemn Russia's attempts to set up illegitimate alternative administrative structures in Kherson, Mariupol and in other towns in Ukraine. This follows a clear pattern from its illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 2014 and its recognition

of the illegal entities in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. Any attempts by Russia to conduct so-called “referenda” at the barrel of a gun in order to proclaim new “people’s republics” are illegal and futile and we will not recognize them. We urge Russia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all its neighbours within their internationally recognized borders and territorial waters.

6. Furthermore, Russia is trying to occupy the information space by flooding it with disinformation in order to deflect the blame for atrocities committed against peaceful civilians and blurring evidence of possible Russian war crimes. Russian state-controlled news agencies as well as a coordinated network of Russian propaganda channels are working hard trying to put the blame on Ukraine. In this context, we also condemn Russia’s internal repression against those independent voices speaking the truth about Putin’s war against Ukraine. This must stop. Russia must immediately release all those arrested in peaceful protests, as well as those imprisoned on politically motivated charges, including all media actors.

7. The EU commends the Ukrainian people’s admirable strength, courage and resistance to withstand Russia’s unlawful war and stands with them in firm solidarity. Ukraine, as any sovereign State, has the inherent right to choose its own future and destiny. The European Union and its Member States are providing assistance to Ukraine, including humanitarian, medical and financial aid and shelter for those fleeing the war. We stand by the people of Ukraine as well as the representatives of its democratically elected institutions in these dark hours. As the President of the European Council Charles Michel underlined during his visit to Kyiv earlier this week, we will do everything possible to support Ukraine and to make sure that Ukraine will win the war.

I kindly ask that this Statement be appended to the Journal of the Day.

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

MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.