



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1420 Vienna, 27 April 2023

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

1. Mr. Chair, despite Russian officials, including those present in this very room, claiming that Russia is seeking peace, the Kremlin's actions on the ground demonstrate the opposite. Deliberate Russian attacks on Ukrainian towns, civilians, and critical civilian infrastructure occur daily, revealing that Russia's war of aggression shows no signs of abating. This past week, several Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kyiv and seaport Odesa, were attacked by Russia using Iranian "Shahed" drones. On 22 April, Russia bombed Kharkiv and its surrounding region, firing at least 5 S-300 missiles on civilian infrastructure and residential areas. On 25 April, a Russian attack in Kupyansk destroyed the Local History Museum, killing at least 2 civilians and injuring 10 others.
2. Let us be unequivocal - if Russia is genuinely seeking peace, it can achieve it immediately. All that Russia needs to do is to end its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and to withdraw all military forces, proxies, and equipment, unconditionally and entirely, from the whole territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. The EU condemns the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression provided by Belarus. It urges all countries not to provide material or other support for Russia's war of aggression. All Ukrainians illegally and forcibly transferred within Ukrainian territory temporarily occupied by Russia or deported to Russia, particularly children, must be permitted to return safely to their homes. Those responsible for war crimes and other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine will be held accountable and brought to justice. Ukraine and its people must receive justice and adequate reparations from Russia. The EU fully supports Ukraine's and the international community's efforts

towards the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for the prosecution of the crime of aggression.

3. Mr Chair, as long as Russia's aggression against Ukraine persists, we will seize every opportunity to put pressure on Russia to end its illegal and imperialistic war of aggression, expose Russia's lies and wrongdoings, and support Ukraine in its rightful self-defence in all ways we can, using all tools at our disposal. The EU has been standing with Ukraine and its people, who have rightfully and courageously defended their homeland for 14 months already, and we will continue to do so as long as necessary. Russia should not underestimate our resolve.
4. In this context, we express our gratitude to the OSCE Chairpersonship for organising the 2nd SHDM meeting and placing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine at the centre of its discussions. This meeting, along with its side events, provided us with ample opportunities to shed more light on the numerous and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by the Russian Armed Forces and its proxies, including the so-called "Wagner" group, in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The reports of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, ODIHR and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine play a crucial role in this regard. We are awaiting the report of the mission of experts under the Moscow Mechanism, following its recent invocation on 30th March, by 45 participating States, including all EU Member States.
5. Yesterday, 26th of April, marked the International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day, a sobering reminder of the grave impact that nuclear incidents can have on both humanity and the environment. Even after 37 years, thousands of hectares of Ukrainian land remain uninhabitable for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Moreover, neighbouring countries and a large portion of Europe were gravely affected. Against this backdrop, Russia's decision to target Ukraine's nuclear plants and facilities, including the one in Chernobyl, as part of its war of aggression against Ukraine is both reckless and irresponsible. We strongly condemn Russia's actions and demand that it withdraw all military

personnel and equipment, including those of ROSATOM, from the Zaporizhzhia NPP and return full control to its rightful owner - Ukraine.

6. On 22 April, Earth Day was celebrated worldwide amid record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases causing significant changes to the environment. At the same time, Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine continues to inflict severe environmental consequences. It increases the world's vulnerability to climate change and impedes greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts. The reported sustained damage to water bodies, supply systems, and valuable ecosystems, biodiversity, and marine sites is of great concern, not only in Ukraine but throughout the OSCE region, including the Black Sea. Urgent action is needed. The EU will continue to support Ukraine in mitigating the environmental impact of Russia's war of aggression and commends international efforts to help minimise environmental and economic threats to security, including the OCEEA's relevant project.
7. On 23 April, the world celebrated World Book and Copyright Day. On this occasion, we pay special tribute to those risking their lives to preserve the distinct Ukrainian language, linguistic diversity and artistic creations in the illegally Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine. Russia will not succeed in erasing Ukrainian language, identity, and culture.
8. Mr. Chair, the EU remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. The latest report by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, titled "Crimean Tatars' Struggle for Human Rights," released on 18 April, highlights numerous examples of violations. We urge Russia to comply with its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law and to cease repressing the local population immediately. Furthermore, we demand the immediate and unconditional release of all those who have been arbitrarily or illegally detained, including Crimean Tatar political prisoners and OSCE SMM local staff.
9. Mr. Chair, our commitment to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders remains unwavering. We support President Zelenskyy's peace formula and reiterate that 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.

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.