



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No.1451 Vienna, 16 November 2023

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

1. Twenty months since the beginning of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, Russia's indiscriminate shelling near the frontlines and deliberate attacks against cities, civilians and civilian infrastructure across Ukraine have sadly become a constant feature of daily life for Ukrainians. On 11th November, as we marked the first anniversary of the liberation of the Ukrainian city of Kherson from the illegal occupation by the Russian forces, Russia launched at least 31 drones and missiles, targeting Kyiv, for the first time in over 50 days, as well as Kharkiv and Odesa.
2. A recent incident saw a Russian missile striking a Liberia-flagged civilian ship entering the Ukrainian Black Sea port of Pivdennyi, resulting in civilian casualties. According to the UN, Russia has carried out more than 30 attacks on Ukrainian port facilities since its unilateral withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July, but this attack marked the first time that civilians were reportedly killed and injured on a civilian vessel. This is a stark reminder of Russia's disregard for human life and its readiness to weaponise global food security and even commercial links to achieve the goals of its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. We condemn Russia's systematic targeting of Ukrainian Black Sea Ports and civilian infrastructure and welcome steps by Ukraine to strengthen alternative

export routes, free of Russian control. We will continue to support all efforts, including those of the UN, and through the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes, to facilitate exports of Ukraine's grain and other agricultural products to the countries most in need, notably in Africa and the Middle East

3. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is all the more reprehensible as it flagrantly violates fundamental principles of international law and the rules-based international order, the lynchpin of which are the inviolability of internationally recognised borders, and the territorial integrity and sovereign equality of independent states. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine transgresses all moral and legal boundaries of modern warfare, without any regard for the international humanitarian law principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. Russia's attempts to erase Ukraine's cultural identity and heritage, whether by deliberately attacking Ukrainian cultural, educational and religious institutions and buildings or deporting Ukrainian children, forcibly re-educating them and even attempting to conscript them into the Russian Armed Forces, further demonstrate the egregious nature of the Russian conduct of war and its disregard for the rules-based international order.
4. We reiterate our 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.
5. The EU, together with its international partners, will not cease calling out Russia's violations of international law. We will continue to seek justice and full accountability for all damages and crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. And above all, Russia and its

leadership will be held fully accountable for waging a war of aggression against Ukraine.

6. With its war of aggression, Russia aimed at depriving Ukraine of its foreign policy choice in favour of European integration. However, this only strengthened Ukraine's resolve to step up comprehensive reforms that will bring it closer to the EU. Now, Ukraine enjoys the status of a candidate country. The European Council acknowledged Ukraine's commitment and substantial efforts to meet the required conditions in its EU accession process and encouraged Ukraine to continue on its path of reforms. Moreover, along with its last week's recommendation that the Council opens accession negotiations with Ukraine, the Commission assessed that the Ukrainian government and Parliament have demonstrated resolve in making substantial progress on meeting the 7 steps of the European Commission's Opinion on Ukraine's EU membership application. What is particularly remarkable is that Ukrainians are determined to deeply reform their country even as they are fighting an existential war. This commitment is highly commendable and deserves our respect.
7. Mr. Chair, we will continue to stand with Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes, for Ukraine to rightfully defend itself against Russia's brutal war of aggression and win the just peace it deserves. To this end, we will continue to provide Ukraine with strong financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support.
8. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU and its Member States will continue their intensified diplomatic outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and other countries to ensure the widest possible international support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace and the key principles and objectives of Ukraine's Peace Formula, with a view to a Global Peace Summit being held.

9. In conclusion, we once again call on Russia to immediately stop its war of aggression against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We also condemn the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine provided by Belarus and Iran, as well as illegal arms transfers and military cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Russia. We urge all countries not to provide material or other support for this aggression.

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.