



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council 1418 Vienna, 12 April 2023

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

1. Madam Chair, at the outset, allow me to express our appreciation for convening this Special meeting of the Permanent Council and for keeping Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine at the forefront of the Organisation's agenda. We warmly welcome Ms. Herasymchuk and thank her for her presentation. No country has the right to launch a war of aggression against its neighbour, kill its people, undermine its statehood and attempt to steal its lands at will. To avoid similar blatant and illegal attacks on any country in the future, it is imperative that we continue to unequivocally condemn and firmly reject the heinous acts of the Russian Federation against Ukraine today and every day. We reiterate that Russia bears full responsibility and accountability for its unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and its people.
2. These days, numerous OSCE participating states are celebrating Easter. For the second consecutive year, peaceful celebrations are not possible for the people of Ukraine, due to Russia's ongoing brutal war of aggression waged against their country, while Russian shelling continues. Millions of them have been displaced within Ukraine or abroad seeking international protection, they have lost their homes, and are separated from family members. Thousands have been illegally deported to Russia, among them many children. Many Ukrainian families are unaware of the whereabouts and wellbeing of their loved ones who have been unlawfully detained or forcibly transferred.

3. Despite Russian officials, including their representatives in this very room, spreading a smokescreen about Russia's supposed interest in seeking peace, Russia's actions on the ground prove the opposite. The daily deliberate attacks on Ukrainian towns, civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, demonstrate that Russia's war of aggression shows no sign of stopping. On 9th April, it was reported that a Russian missile attack on a residential building in the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia resulted in the tragic deaths of a 50-year-old man and his 11-year-old daughter.
4. To bring an end to the war it started, Russia must stop its aggression and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces and proxies, as well as military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Russia must also immediately ensure the safe return of all Ukrainians illegally and forcibly transferred to Ukrainian territory temporarily and illegally occupied by Russia or deported to Russia, in particular children. All those responsible for war crimes, and other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including those sought by the ICC, will be held accountable and brought to justice. The EU also 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. The EU notes the call of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine in its latest report for a comprehensive approach to accountability that includes both criminal responsibility and the victims' right to truth, reparation and non-repetition.
5. Russia must also cease its information manipulation and interference against Ukraine, other neighbouring countries, such as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, and other OSCE participating States. The EU is committed to intensifying its efforts with partners to counter false Russian narratives, historical distortions and disinformation about the war, in a systematic, long-lasting and comprehensive manner.
6. Madam Chair, the EU stands united and in full solidarity with Ukraine and its people who are rightfully and courageously defending themselves against Russia's brutal

war of aggression. Ukraine is exercising its inherent right to self-defence in full compliance with international law, notably Article 51 of the UN Charter. Ukraine has the right to liberate and regain full control of all illegally Russian-occupied territories within its internationally recognised borders, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula.

7. Special words of solidarity and support are extended to those resisting Russia's invasion in the temporarily occupied parts of Ukraine, including in the Crimean peninsula. We urge Russia to respect and fulfil its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Russia must stop repressions against the local population, and immediately and unconditionally release all those arbitrarily and illegally detained, including Crimean Tatar political prisoners, as well as OSCE staff members.
8. The EU will continue to provide strong political, economic, military, financial, legal and humanitarian support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes. The EU and its Member States are increasing their efforts to help meet Ukraine's pressing military and defence needs.
9. The EU reiterates its support for President Zelenskyy's initiative for a just peace. We will continue working with Ukraine on the 10-point peace plan. Regrettably, we have not seen to date any willingness on Russia's side to cease its hostilities, withdraw its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, and work towards a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace. The Kremlin is only repeating its ultimatums, doubling down on its brutal aggression without abandoning its goal of subjugating Ukraine and undermining its statehood and independence. We reiterate that any diplomatic solution to end Russia's illegal war must be based on full respect of international law and its rules 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.