



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1402 Vienna, 15 December 2022

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

1. Mr Chair, the last regular Permanent Council of 2022 is a good opportunity to look back on a year that brought unimaginable horror and grief to Europe. Through its illegal, unjustifiable and unprovoked war of aggression, the Russian Federation is grossly violating international law, the UN Charter as well as OSCE principles and commitments and thereby fundamentally undermining European security and stability. Pursuing its imperialistic ambitions, Russia has invaded a peaceful and sovereign neighbouring State, Ukraine; razed towns and villages to the ground, attempted to illegally annex Ukraine's territories, killed and wounded thousands of civilians, targeted energy and water supply, as well as attempted to blackmail the world through food and energy shortages. There is also growing evidence of sexual and gender-based violence, used as a tactic of war by Russia's forces, as well as of large-scale forced deportations of Ukrainian civilians to Russia, including children. Russia has even illegally seized and targeted nuclear power plants in Ukraine, thus significantly increasing the risk of a nuclear incident or accident, with potentially severe adverse consequences for human health and the environment. Mr Chair, we have only one thing to say about this despicable behaviour: Russia bears full responsibility for its war of aggression as well as all the destruction and loss of life it is causing. Those responsible must and will be held to account.
2. Mr Chair, throughout this year, the Ukrainian people have made it clear that they are rock solid in their brave choice of liberty, democracy and the rule of law. This has been demonstrated day by day through their heroic fight against the aggressor. The Ukrainians are defending their statehood, dignity and freedom. The dignity, freedom, and democracy of the whole of Europe are also at stake. We applaud and support the just cause of the Ukrainian people.

3. This is why the European Union sees it as its moral duty to face this historic challenge and defend the rules-based international order. We will continue to stand united by the people of Ukraine and its democratically elected institutions and representatives. We share a common, peaceful and prosperous future. This is why the EU has granted Ukraine candidate status, as well as to the Republic of Moldova. The EU also resolutely supports Ukraine's inherent right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. No outright lies and no disinformation campaigns can hide the truth: Russia has decided to launch the biggest war of aggression in Europe since World War II.
4. We condemn the involvement of the Lukashenka regime in the ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU has repeatedly called on Belarus to abide by its international obligations and refrain from serving as a training base for Russia's forces and as a launchpad for aerial attacks against Ukraine, which is an aggression in itself. A few days after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a sham constitutional referendum was organised by the Belarusian regime, against the backdrop of widespread human rights violations and brutal repression throughout Belarusian society and amid anti-war protests. Similar internal repression has been conducted by Russian authorities inside Russia, where human rights and fundamental freedoms have been severely constrained during the last years, persistently violating the European Convention on Human Rights.
5. The democratic world will hold to account all those responsible for this war and all those who violate international law and international humanitarian law. The use of force to change borders has no place in the 21st century. The EU will continue to cooperate closely with partners and reiterates its unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as of Georgia and of the Republic of Moldova. We will stand with any partner that is under attack by an aggressor.
6. Mr Chair, for as long as it takes, we will take the floor in this Council to condemn Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We will demand with unwavering determination that Russia stop its war of aggression and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. In addition, we

reiterate that any further actions and, in particular, any direct involvement of the Belarusian military in Russia's war of aggression will be met by a strong and resolute response.

7. The year of 2022 has been one of the darkest years in recent memory. However, in a few weeks, we will enter 2023, and we will do it with resolute determination. Europe deserves better. The world deserves better. Ukraine deserves peace and security. Mr Chair, the European security order cannot be rewritten to satisfy the imperialistic ambitions of an aggressor. We will continue to stand up for our common principles and commitments, and to stand up for what is right. We are sincerely hoping that 2023 will be the year when peace and justice is brought to all those who have suffered as a result of Russia's illegal war against Ukraine.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Country BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, 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.