



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No.1471

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

1. Almost 800 days since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, every new day brings only further death and destruction to the Ukrainian people. On 26th April, Russia continued its brutal attacks on Ukrainian civilians and civilian objects, resulting in at least five deaths in Donetsk region and injuries to dozens more in several other Ukrainian regions, including Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, Cherkasy, and Sumy. Meanwhile, Russia's reprehensible targeted attacks on Ukrainian energy and port infrastructure continued unabated over the past week. On 29<sup>th</sup> April alone, Russia targeted a total of 10 Ukrainian regions, killing at least five people in Odesa and injuring more than thirty others across Ukraine.
2. Furthermore, we recall the findings of the Moscow Mechanism Report on the arbitrary deprivation of liberty of Ukrainian civilians, presented last week. We strongly condemn the ongoing violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL) by Russia, including arbitrary detention of civilians in the temporarily and illegally occupied territories of Ukraine, which puts them at risk of other grave violations such as torture and enforced disappearances. As outlined in many international reports, such as the Moscow Mechanism Report presented on 25 April 2024, this practice began in Crimea in 2014 and has continued after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Facts are facts, and international law is not optional - no amount of derogatory language or dismissive attitude can change either *de jure* or *de facto* the reality on the

ground. Accountability will be ensured and justice will be served for all the victims of Russian aggression.

3. The latest findings also confirm Russia's complete disregard for the special protection guarantees that individuals in vulnerable situations, such as children, persons with disabilities, and pregnant women, as well as persons enjoying privileges and immunities are entitled to under international law. This is all the more important on the eve of the first anniversary of the invocation of the Moscow Mechanism on the forcible transfer and/or deportation of Ukrainian children by Russia and two years into the arbitrary deprivation of liberty by Russia of three OSCE SMM staff members. Moreover, the latest Moscow Mechanism report points to cases of Ukrainian children being arbitrarily detained in a similar fashion as adults, including incommunicado, which represents another grave violation by Russia. This adds to the EU's grave concerns regarding the fate of these children and the possibilities for returning them home.
4. The situation of Ukrainian civilians arbitrarily detained by Russia, is very similar to that of Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs). International monitoring mechanisms, including ODIHR, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, have extensively documented the existing patterns of IHL and IHRL violations in relation to the treatment of POWs by Russia. For example, the latest 38<sup>th</sup> Report by OHCHR on the human rights situation in Ukraine corroborates previous findings that Ukrainian POWs are subjected by Russia to widespread torture and ill-treatment, including poor conditions of internment, and lack of access to medical assistance.
5. The EU once again urges Russia to uphold international law and to comply with its international commitments, inter alia by immediately and unconditionally releasing all arbitrarily detained civilians, including the three SMM staff members, and granting Ukrainian POWs the protection and humane treatment they are entitled to under international law.

6. We also stress our determination to ensure full accountability for all crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including the crime of aggression. To this end, we remain committed to continue making full use of all relevant OSCE tools and mechanisms, and to exploring avenues with all relevant international organisations.
7. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We are determined to continue providing Ukraine and its people with all the necessary political, financial, economic, humanitarian, legal, military and diplomatic support for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed, also taking into account the urgent need to speed up and intensify the delivery of all necessary military assistance to Ukraine in its rightful self-defence against the Russian aggressor.
8. The latest tangible testimony of the EU's commitment in this respect is the disbursement on 24<sup>th</sup> April of a second tranche of exceptional bridge financing to Ukraine under the Ukraine Facility, amounting to €1.5 billion. With this payment, total EU support to Ukraine and its people since February 2022 has now reached €98.5 billion.
9. We will continue intensive global outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and other partners 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, based on the UN Charter.
10. We reiterate that the path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace is for the aggressor, Russia, to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia must also immediately end its continued, systematic and brutal attacks against Ukraine and its people. We condemn the continued military support for Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine provided by Belarus, as well as Iran, and the DPRK. We urge all countries not to provide

material or other support for Russia's war of aggression, which is a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and the OSCE's core principles and commitments.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, and GEORGIA, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO, and the Partner for cooperation Australia align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.