



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1071 Vienna, 28 February 2024

EU Statement on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

1. Mr Chair, last Saturday we sadly held the second commemoration of the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. We strongly condemn this illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression by the Russian Federation supported by Belarus against its sovereign and peaceful neighbour Ukraine which has been ongoing for 735 days, bringing unspeakable suffering, destruction and death. This aggression however finds its roots on 20 February 2014, when Russian Special Operations Forces started the occupation of the Crimean peninsula, which later in March 2014 led to its illegal annexation by the Russian Federation. Ukraine has been bravely defending itself now for a decade. Defence against a blatant violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity, defence against a gross violation of internationally recognised borders and defence against a complete disregard of the free choices of the Ukrainian people in determining their future. We reiterate our firmest condemnation of these words and acts.
2. Mr Chair, in recent weeks, on top of absurd and repulsive propaganda, Russia brought up the topic of the Minsk Agreements, twisting the facts and hopelessly blaming others for its failure. It was Russia alone who brought an end to the Minsk Agreements by recognising the independence of the so-called "Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk" on 21 February 2022 and three days later by launching its brutal full-scale invasion. In fact, Russia never acted as a mediator in the process. Russia was and is a party to the conflict. Russia bears full responsibility for the end of those attempts to stop bloodshed – instead, Russia brought death, terror and suffering upon so many innocent people.
3. We will not tire from demanding that Russia fully comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. In this regard, we are horrified by last

week's reports about alleged executions of Ukrainian Prisoners of War by Russian forces in Avdiivka.

4. In close coordination with our partners, the EU will spare no efforts to hold Russia's political leadership and authorities to account for all its reprehensible acts. Last Friday, the EU adopted a new package of sanctions, further limiting Russia's access to military technologies, such as for drones, and listing 106 individuals and 88 entities involved in Russia's war effort.
5. Mr. Chair, the plight and suffering of women, men and children in Ukraine continues unabated as a direct result of Russia's targeted attacks on Ukraine's key energy and civilian infrastructure like hospitals, schools and power grids, thereby seriously hampering people's access to basic services. Up to 14.6 million Ukrainians are in need of humanitarian aid including shelter in freezing conditions. The European Commission announced last week a new humanitarian funding package of EUR 83m for Ukraine and also for the Republic of Moldova to provide emergency aid including access to basic needs such as shelter, protection services, clean water, education and healthcare.
6. Furthermore, as stated by High Representative Borrell at the EU Foreign Ministers' meeting in Brussels on 19 February, we remain determined to provide timely, predictable and sustainable military support to Ukraine, notably through the European Peace Facility and the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM), as well as through direct bilateral assistance by Member States, in line with Ukraine's needs. As per our commitments and as per the 1 February 2024 European Council conclusions, we will increase our provision of ammunition through bilateral and European frameworks, notably through the framework contracts of the European Defence Agency.
7. On the political front, we continue our intensive global outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and partners from all regions of the world 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. We want to reaffirm here once again: There is absolutely no justification for this horrendous war of aggression.
8. Mr. Chair, the EU and its Member States reiterate that Russia must immediately stop its illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression, put an end to this

unbearable suffering and devastation, 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, 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.

Thank you.

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 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.