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

Madam Chair, we frequently hear the Russian representatives in the OSCE complain about the attention given to what they term the “Ukrainian issue” here in the Hofburg. However, we must clarify that this is not a “Ukrainian issue” we are discussing here. It is a **“Russian issue” that pertains to Russia’s unwarranted war of aggression against its independent, sovereign and peaceful neighbour, Ukraine. We reiterate our strongest condemnation of Russia’s illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression.** Russia’s actions constitute a flagrant violation of international law, of the fundamental principles and commitments on which European security is built and which we all must uphold - including the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris. This is why **we support Ukraine in its inherent right of self-defence** in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Ukraine has the right to protect its independence, sovereignty and to recover its territorial integrity.

The Kremlin’s shameful propaganda, projected week after week onto our screens here by Russian diplomats, cannot justify the unjustifiable. **It was Russia that started this war of its choice**, thus heightening risks to European and global security. Russia has embarked on a destructive path causing immeasurable human suffering. We bear witness to countless lives lost, extensive physical and psychological traumas, millions of displaced persons, forced transfers and deportations of children to Russia and within occupied territories, sexual and gender-based violence, and deliberate, large-scale destruction of civilian infrastructure. Russia continues its ruthless missile and drone

attacks across Ukraine, attempting to terrorise the civilian population. Yet, these brutal actions inadvertently demonstrate the effectiveness and significance of international military assistance to Ukraine.

We reiterate our demand that Russia **immediately stop its war of aggression** and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. **We also call on the Belarusian authorities to put an immediate end to their support of Russia's war**, and reverse decisions that can only contribute to heightening tensions in the region. The longer Russia wages its brutal war, the higher the costs for Russia, including on its own people and reputation. While the Russian diplomats here at the OSCE each time reassure themselves about the objectives of their so-called “special military operations”, last week, Konstantin Zatulin, member of President Putin’s “United Russia” party, declared that none of the objectives has been achieved. Unsurprisingly, it is becoming increasingly evident, even for those close to Putin’s regime, that **this war has been an unprecedented, self-inflicted strategic failure**.

Madam Chair, allow me to quote from yesterday’s statement by High Representative Josep Borrel and Commissioner Janez Lenarčič: Russia’s attacks against Ukrainian civilian critical infrastructure reached an unprecedented level with the **destruction of the dam at Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant**. We condemn this attack in the strongest possible terms. The downstream flooding is putting at risk the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians in around 80 settlements, including the city of Kherson. It aggravates the already dire humanitarian situation in those areas. Dropping water levels of the dam also affect the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. With this desperate act, Russia is also continuing its reckless nuclear gamble by putting at risk the proper functioning of the safety and security systems of the ZNPP. It is irresponsible and completely unacceptable. We recall that attacks on critical civilian infrastructure may amount to war crimes.

Madam Chair, it is essential to **ensure full accountability for war crimes and other most serious crimes**, including **the crime of aggression**. All perpetrators, and those directly responsible, will be held to account for their decisions and actions. **Those ordering, committing and supporting crimes must know they cannot act with impunity**.

Our solidarity with Ukraine is unwavering. Our comprehensive support is of unprecedented scale, including long-term political, financial, humanitarian, legal, economic and military support. The EU and its Member States have so far provided over 70 billion EUR in assistance to Ukraine and its people. We are also increasing delivery of ammunition and supporting, through EUMAM Ukraine, the military training of up to 30,000 Ukrainian personnel by the end of the year.

We stand steadfast in our commitment to the principles of peace, and respect for all nations' sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. We remain determined and encouraged to work with Ukraine and our international partners **to find a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on international law safeguarding** Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We have stood with Ukraine from the earliest hours of these testing times and will continue to support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom, sovereignty, and their European future for as long as necessary.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, the EFTA countries NORWAY, ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, 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