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EU Statement on Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine

Mr. Chair, almost eight months ago President Putin decided to invade Ukraine. The Russian aggression has caused **a rupture in Europe's modern history. All attempts of justification** for this full-scale war of aggression **do not stand up to scrutiny**. It is clear to us as it is to the international community: Russia's brutal, premeditated and unprovoked aggression constitutes **a blatant violation of international law**, UN Charter and the most basic principles of our Organisation. We repeat today **our firmest condemnation** of Russia's illegal actions.

The effects of the **Kremlin's strategic mistake** are evident. Firstly for Ukraine and Ukrainians **thousands** of whom have been **killed, tortured, harassed, sexually assaulted, forcibly displaced and deported. Ukrainian children** have been **torn away** from their families and deported to Russia. These acts are in violation of international humanitarian law and basic human decency. Last week, Russia intensified its heinous and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure all over Ukraine, which continue to date. It is appalling that, particularly, with the onset of winter, the electricity and heating infrastructure of Ukraine was targeted. Damage and destruction brought upon Ukraine's infrastructure and economy are devastating. Despite all of this, the **Kremlin's plan to subjugate Ukraine went awry**. In fact, Ukrainians bravely stood up and continue to stand up to the aggressor. They have shown their will, courage and determination to fight for their independence and freedom.

Secondly, in Russia. Even if unmoved by the immense suffering it caused, the Russian leadership should be aware of the **self-inflicted damage** with regard to **Russia's international standing, reputation of its armed forces, its economy and prosperity**, let alone the **staggering losses of its military**. This aggression will remain a bloody stain on the conscience of all those responsible.

Thirdly, for the whole world. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is obviously sending shockwaves across the globe, while aggravating in particular the already dire situation in many countries of the Global South, for example through provoking an increase in prices of energy and food. At the same time, it is an **acute challenge to international peace and stability**. **The final vote in the UN General Assembly's emergency session last week, 143 to 5, was a resounding message to the Kremlin**. The vast majority of States underlined the fundamental obligation to respect the territorial integrity of other States. Russia's aggression and the brazen attempt of a territorial grab by sham referenda were decisively condemned and rejected. Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, alongside Crimea, are and will remain parts of the sovereign territory of Ukraine.

Mr. Chair, in the face of this aggression, Ukraine, is exercising its **inherent right of self-defence**, in line with the UN Charter. The **EU and its Member States**, alongside many international partners, **have been supporting Ukraine** in this just cause from the very beginning and **will continue doing so** as long as necessary and to the extent needed. Last Monday, the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU, in response to a request by Ukraine, decided to **set up a Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine**. The objective of the Mission is to provide both basic and specialised as well as individual and collective training to Ukrainian soldiers, defending their homeland. Moreover, the Council decided to increase by 500 million EUR to a total of 3.1 billion EUR the assistance provided through the **European Peace Facility** that supports the defence needs of Ukraine.

Mr. Chair, as the Ukrainian Armed Forces liberate more and more territory, the **extent of atrocities** committed by the aggressor army becomes even more visible and shocking. There are numerous and consistent reports of Ukrainian citizens being abused or even executed by the occupying forces, including the most recent one about Yuriy Kerpatenko, chief conductor of the Kherson Music and Drama Theatre, shot for refusing to collaborate with the occupiers. We underline once again the importance of accountability. The **perpetrators** and **those responsible** for war crimes and crimes against humanity **must be held to account**.

Mr. Chair, recently Russian representatives here and elsewhere are alleging that the so-called “Collective West” had been closing their eyes on what was happening in Ukraine since 2014. Nothing is further from the truth. We, and others in this room, have been **vocal about Russia’s acts of aggression against Ukraine since February 2014** and the attempted illegal annexation of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. This was a standing weekly topic both at the FSC and the Permanent Council. **The Special Monitoring Mission (SMM)** in Ukraine had been doing **a great job in painstakingly documenting** the security situation at the line of contact, ceasefire violations and all the civilian casualties. We shall not forget that **without Russia violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine back in 2014 there would not have been 14 thousand victims** of that conflict and many millions displaced (before the Russian invasion in February 2022). We shall not forget either that it was Russia and its proxies who were limiting the freedom of movement of the SMM. It was Russia who did not agree to the extensions of both the Border Observer Mission and the SMM and **it is Russia that still keeps the SMM staff imprisoned**.

We urge Russia to immediately cease all actions against and at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and any other nuclear facility in Ukraine, in order for **Ukrainian authorities to regain full control** over all nuclear facilities within Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders. We note the statement of the IAEA Director General Grossi of 14 October emphasizing that the overall nuclear safety and security

situation remains precarious, as since August, there has been frequent shelling at or near the ZNPP, including two landmine explosions last Friday outside the ZNPP perimeter fence. In this context, we emphasize the importance for the Ukrainian staff to carry out their vital tasks without undue interference or pressure.

Mr. Chair, we reiterate our call on the **Belarusian authorities to refrain from any involvement in Russia's brutal, callous and illegal war of aggression** against Ukraine and, in particular, to immediately **stop providing military support and allowing the territory of Belarus to serve as a launchpad** for attacks against Ukraine.

Mr. Chair, the European Union and its Member States **remain unwavering in their support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders**, and **demand that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine**. Our political, military, economic and humanitarian support to Ukraine will not falter.

Thank you!

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE and REPUBLIC of MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, the EFTA countries NORWAY, ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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