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EU Statement on Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine

Mr. Chair, today we cannot but condemn in the strongest possible terms the Kremlin's deliberate decision to **escalate its war of aggression** in total **disregard for** and in **blatant violation** of **international humanitarian law**. As the Russian army suffers successive setbacks on the battlefield, **Russia has chosen to inflict unspeakable human suffering** upon Ukrainians and to destroy as much of Ukraine's infrastructure as possible. In the last few days, we have witnessed an **intensification** of this continuing trend. In particular **on Monday, Russia launched massive air attacks** on most Ukrainian regions, including Kyiv city centre and other major cities across the country, targeting civilian infrastructure, including homes, streets, parks, playgrounds and other public spaces. These **barbaric and cowardly attacks** occurred in the morning traffic, with the aim to maximise their terrorising effect on the civilian population. We remind the Russian delegation that the **indiscriminate targeting of civilians constitutes a war crime**. The **perpetrators** and those **responsible** for war crimes and crimes against humanity **must and will be held to account**. Moreover, the reported violation of the airspace of the Republic of Moldova during the aforementioned airstrikes is unacceptable and represents another irresponsible action by the Russian Federation.

Later this week, **Ukraine** will mark the **Day of the Defender**. On this occasion we wish to **pay tribute** to the **brave Ukrainian women and men** for their heroic resistance against the aggressor bent on the suppression of Ukraine's national identity and statehood. Unlike Russia's, Ukraine's fight is an existential one as Ukrainian Armed

Forces know that they fight for their families, their way of life and the right for their country to choose its own future.

Mr. Chair, last week in the Museum of Military History here in Vienna, during a sober event on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of this Forum, we repeatedly heard that **wars should belong to museums**. Regrettably, **the Kremlin has chosen to return to the darkest times of history**, thus violating the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. **The threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state are prohibited**. These principles are universal and fundamental. **They must be collectively defended**. **Ukraine**, for its part, **is exercising its legitimate right to defend itself** against Russia and to restore its territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, in line with the UN Charter and international law. Furthermore, all States have the right to support Ukraine in this just cause and we will continue doing so, including through military support.

We will not stop stressing how, from its very beginning, **this war has been a strategic mistake**. Now, eight months into it, there is hardly anyone in Moscow saying that all is going according to plan. Russians seem not to understand the shifting goals of this war as more and more people seem to choose fleeing over mobilisation. Moreover, Russia continues to be increasingly isolated, politically and economically, by the international community who is determined to stand in unprecedented solidarity with Ukraine.

Mr. Chair, in another act of desperation, at the end of September, **Russia resorted to conducting sham referenda** in the territories of eastern and southern Ukraine and then **claimed a so-called annexation** of those territories. **This charade does not change anything**, neither for Ukraine nor for us. We remain firm in rejecting these outrageous actions. **Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson are parts of the sovereign territory of Ukraine**.

Mr. Chair, **Russia's actions in and around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP)** as well as other nuclear facilities in Ukraine **pose a threat to the safety and security** and **increase the risk of a nuclear accident**. **We condemn Russia's attempts to legitimise its illegal seizure of nuclear facilities** in Ukrainian sovereign territory, including President Putin's decree last week on the ZNPP. The EU fully supports the work of the IAEA and its Director General in assisting Ukraine to ensure

nuclear safety and security, and to maintain the implementation of the safeguards. The only way to assure the long-term safety and security of the facility is for Russia to withdraw its troops from the ZNPP and return it to full and exclusive Ukrainian control.

The **Kremlin's strategy based on irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, military mobilisation and seeking to illegally incorporate Ukraine's territory into Russia will not shake our resolve.** Nobody will be deceived by the Kremlin's attempts in purporting that the war is now taking place on Russia's territory.

The unfounded accusations of the Belarusian government against Ukraine are utterly unacceptable. In addition, we deplore Lukashenka's announcement in relation to the deployment of a joint Belarusian and Russian regional group of troops. We urge the **Belarusian authorities to refrain from any further involvement in Russia's brutal, callous and illegal war of aggression** against Ukraine and, in particular, to immediately stop allowing the territory of Belarus to serve as a launchpad for attacks against Ukraine and Ukrainian civilians.

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. We are committed to support Ukraine in its just cause and **increase the pressure on the Kremlin to end this war.** Therefore, last Thursday, the Council of the European Union adopted the **8th package of economic and individual sanctions** which will continue to weigh on the Russian war effort. 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 and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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