



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No.1456 Vienna, 14 December 2023

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

1. Mr. Chair, the last regular Permanent Council meeting for 2023 is a good opportunity to take stock of the past year. Looking back, we cannot help but recall the grimmest landmarks of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine over the course of 2023. In January, 46 innocent people were killed by a Russian missile attack on an apartment building in Dnipro. In April, Russian attacks on Ukrainian residential areas in Uman and Sloviansk killed 38 more Ukrainian civilians. Two months later, another deadly Russian attack took the lives of 13 people in Kramatorsk. And in September, a funeral reception in Hroza became the target of a premeditated Russian attack, as evidenced by OHCHR, that left more than 50 people dead and many more injured. And these are just a few appalling examples of the terror Russia inflicts on Ukraine and its people every day and night.
2. According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior, over the period of January to November of this year, Russia fired 59,000 times at settlements in 24 regions of Ukraine, as a result of which 11,000 civilians have been injured and 2,000 killed. The toll on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure is equally staggering, with hundreds of thousands of buildings and infrastructure objects across Ukraine having been destroyed or damaged as part of Russia's deliberate attacks against civilians and civilian objects. With the onset of winter, Russia's large-scale missile attack of 8th December that hit critical infrastructure facilities and

residential buildings in Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions, demonstrates Russia's determination to again use winter as a weapon against human beings in the pursuit of its neo-imperialistic goals.

3. Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and the crimes committed as part of it are antithetical to everything international law and OSCE principles stand for. Ironically enough, the results Russia has achieved so far are the opposite of its initial aims. What Russia thought would be a small and victorious war has turned into prolonged bloodshed and devastation that has only exposed Russia's indifference to the value of human life.
4. Russia attempted to subjugate the Ukrainian people, break its spirit of resistance, and destroy its distinct culture. The Ukrainians, however, are now more determined than ever before to defend their statehood, sovereignty and cultural and linguistic identity. This has been demonstrated day by day through their heroic fight against the Russian aggressor.
5. Russia thought it would succeed in legitimising its attempts of illegally annexing the sovereign territory of a neighbouring state via sham referenda staged at gunpoint. Instead, it only triggered widespread condemnation of its actions and ever-increasing international support for the cause of restoring the respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU strongly condemns Russia's decision to hold Russian presidential elections in 2024 also in the territories of Ukraine that Russia has temporarily occupied in blatant violation of international law, and will never recognise the legitimacy of these so-called 'elections' or their results in the territories of Ukraine.
6. With its shameful war of aggression, Russia aimed at depriving Ukraine of its foreign policy choice in favour of European integration. However, this only strengthened Ukraine's resolve to step up comprehensive reforms that will bring it closer to the EU. Now, Ukraine enjoys the status of a candidate country. We reiterate that Ukraine belongs to our European family.
7. Russia thought it could put an end to OSCE activities in Ukraine, but its obstruction was met with the strong commitment of many OSCE participating

States, including the EU and Member States, who managed to preserve vital OSCE activities in Ukraine through the extra-budgetary Support Programme for Ukraine. Apart from aiding the response to war-related challenges, the projects carried out as part of the Programme aim at supporting Ukraine's pro-European reform agenda and facilitating the implementation of some of the points of Ukraine's Peace Formula.

8. Back in February 2022, Russia believed that its criminal actions against Ukraine would enjoy impunity. However, the first-ever international arrest warrant issued by the ICC for the leader of a permanent member of the UN Security Council has sent the clear message that there will be no escape for any perpetrators and accomplices of Russia's crimes in Ukraine. The pursuit for accountability and justice in relation to all crimes committed as part of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including the crime of aggression, as well as for the massive damage caused by its war, will remain a key priority for the EU.
9. We will continue to stand with Ukraine and its brave and resilient people for as long as it takes, for Ukraine to rightfully defend itself against Russia's brutal war of aggression and win the just and lasting peace it deserves. To this end, we will continue to provide Ukraine with strong financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support.
10. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU and its Member States will continue their intensified diplomatic outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and other countries 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, with a view to a Global Peace Summit being held.
11. In conclusion, we once again demand that Russia immediately stop its war of aggression against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all 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 and Iran, as well as the reported arms transfers and military cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Russia for use in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. 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 and of the core commitments of this organisation, the OSCE.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and GEORGIA, the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO 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.