



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1389 Vienna, 15 September 2022

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

1. Mr Chair, while Ukraine and the Ukrainian Armed Forces heroically defend the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russia's war of aggression, Russia's continues its relentless artillery and missile strikes on Ukrainian cities and villages. The EU resolutely supports Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence, and the Ukrainian Armed Forces' efforts to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and population in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. We reaffirm our solidarity with the Ukrainian people and pay tribute to all those who have sacrificed their lives in defence of the independence of Ukraine.
2. Last week, Russia launched again deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure in a number of regions, including Donetsk, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Kherson and Sumy. Local authorities reported ten civilians killed on 8 September alone. Since 24 February, the Ukrainian authorities have recorded 383 children killed. The Russian Federation is further aggravating the situation by shelling critical civilian infrastructure, especially in the energy sector. These cynical acts demonstrate once more its total disregard for international humanitarian law. Furthermore, we constantly receive new reports about horrifying atrocities committed in Ukrainian territory that has been liberated from Russian military control.
3. We condemn in the strongest possible terms not only the continued indiscriminate killing of civilians, but also the ongoing detention, abduction and kidnapping of Ukrainian journalists and other media actors, human rights defenders, local officials and other civilians by the Russian Armed Forces and the Russia-backed illegal armed formations. Equally shocking are the various reports of forced removal of Ukrainians to Russia,

including through so-called “filtration camps”. We remind the Russian Federation that these acts may constitute a possible war crime: The taking of hostages and forcible transfer of civilians, including children, are prohibited under international humanitarian law, notably the Geneva Conventions.

4. Russia’s ongoing war of aggression is having a devastating impact on the lives and aspirations of the children in Ukraine. The start of a new school year for Ukraine’s four million schoolchildren has been impeded by the war, thus impairing their right to education. On the eve of the 2022 UN Transforming Education Summit, we note with dismay that, according to UNICEF, thousands of schools across the country have been damaged or destroyed, with less than 60 per cent of schools deemed safe and eligible to reopen.
5. Russia’s invasion of and ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine and the Ukrainian people have also led to the biggest refugee flow in Europe since the Second World War. Over seven million Ukrainians have fled to other European countries and just as many are internally displaced. We are very concerned about the significantly higher risk of sexual violence, trafficking, exploitation, and abuse that refugees, especially women and children, are exposed to in these circumstances. The EU and its Member States are showing our hospitality to the Ukrainian refugees and are working at all levels to ensure their safe arrival to the EU. About 500 000 Ukrainian children are now enrolled in education systems in various EU Member States.
6. We remain gravely concerned about Russia’s ongoing occupation of, and military actions in and around, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant that violates Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. As IAEA Director General Grossi has stressed after his recent mission on site, the physical integrity of the plant has been violated. Russia’s actions pose serious and direct threats to the safety and security of Ukrainian nuclear facilities, and they have impeded the Agency from fully and safely conducting safeguards verification activities in Ukraine. The attacks of the Russian armed forces at and near Ukraine’s nuclear facilities have caused human suffering and damage to civilian infrastructure, and they significantly increase the risk of a nuclear incident or accident, with potentially severe adverse consequences for human health and the environment.

We therefore urge Russia to immediately stop all military hostilities, to implement the recommendations from the IAEA mission's report without delay and to immediately cede full and exclusive control of the power plant to the Ukrainian authorities.

7. We note that three local OSCE staff members are still detained. It is Russia's responsibility to ensure that these SMM staff members are immediately and unconditionally released. In addition, we once again urge Russia to treat prisoners of war in full compliance with international humanitarian law.
8. Mr Chair, Russia bears full responsibility for this war and all consequences of its despicable acts against Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Russia's actions blatantly violate international law, including the UN Charter and the OSCE principles and commitments. We condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and urge Russia to immediately stop this illegal aggression, and reiterate our call on the Belarusian authorities to stop enabling the Russian aggression and abide by their international obligations. Russia must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.
9. There can be no impunity for war crimes or other international crimes - those responsible must and will be held accountable. The European Union will continue to support efforts to ensure accountability, including actions taken within the OSCE, the UN and the International Criminal Court.
10. The European Union remains strongly committed to assisting Ukraine to uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to defend itself against the aggressor. The European Council has decided to grant the status of candidate country to Ukraine and the EU and its member States are determined to continue their political, financial and military support. These are clear signs of the EU's unshakeable commitment to support Ukraine in building its own peaceful, democratic and prosperous future within the European family.

11. The EU stands with Ukraine, and we will continue to do so for as long as it takes.

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

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