



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1401 Vienna, 8 December 2022

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

1. Mr Chair, let me start by thanking the Foreign Minister of Lithuania, H.E. Gabrielius Landsbergis, for sharing Lithuania's views on Russia's continued war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as on a number of suggestions for our collective actions to address it. Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion on 24 February, almost 10,000 civilians were killed, including 461 children. Each one of them is a life too many to have fallen victim as a result of this incomprehensible and senseless war. We also pay tribute to all those brave Ukrainian men and women of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, who have paid with their lives to uphold their homeland's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to all of those determinedly working to save lives and keep the country's vital functions going. You are all heroes. Together with its international partners, the EU spares no effort to provide Ukraine with all necessary political, military, financial and humanitarian support.
2. We would also like to thank our Chair, Poland, for a well conducted Ministerial Council which this year took place against the backdrop of Russia's illegal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. While our Ministers met in Łódź, deliberate Russian missile and rocket attacks continued to terrorise the Ukrainian population, targeting civilians, civilian objects and infrastructure. Nevertheless, there was no doubt for anyone attending the Ministerial Council that the support for Ukraine is immense and that an overwhelming majority of participating States condemn Russia's heinous acts in Ukraine in the strongest possible terms.
3. The Ministerial Council reaffirmed that the support for the OSCE principles and commitments, those that we have commonly agreed on, are rock solid. It was repeated again and again by Ministers at the plenary session and by participants in side events that we remain steadfastly committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all

States. Our message here, Mr Chair, is that we should not let one participating State, Russia, with the complicity of another, Belarus, challenge the foundations of the European security order. These are the times when we need our principles and commitments the most, and when it is the most important to uphold them.

4. We are currently in a critical stage at the beginning of winter, with 54% of Ukraine's energy infrastructure damaged by Russia's deliberate attacks, making the situation of its energy grid critical. Tens of millions of people are experiencing power shortages as well as disruption of water and heating supplies. We also remain gravely concerned about the continued attacks of the Russian armed forces around Ukrainian nuclear sites and the illegal seizure of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. The situation at the power plant is increasingly "dangerous, precarious and challenging", as described by the IAEA Director General. Recent repeated shelling at this Power Plant is a matter of particularly grave concern, posing a significant and direct threat to the safety and security of the facility and its civilian personnel, thereby significantly raising the risk of a nuclear accident or incident. We support the IAEA Director General's efforts to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the power plant.
5. Moreover, the newly liberated city of Kherson and the surrounding region are more or less under daily indiscriminate artillery shelling resulting in civilian casualties, while the Ukrainian authorities are working resolutely to restore services to its people. The recent massive attacks, including on 5 December, with deliberate shelling of civilian objects, are shameful, reprehensible and totally unacceptable. We are also appalled by reports that Russian troops have used tear gas grenades against Ukrainian Armed Forces fighting in the east of the country. Mr. Chair, let us be clear: the use of chemical and biological weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone and under any circumstances is unacceptable and contravenes international law prohibiting the use of such weapons, namely the Geneva Protocol, the Biological Weapons Convention and Chemical Weapons Convention, all of which Russia has ratified.
6. Mr Chair, human rights including the right to life, and the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, have been blatantly violated in a widespread and systematic way in the areas occupied by Russia. According to reports,

including under the Moscow Mechanism, the most serious violations are likely to constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. Lately, Ukrainian law enforcement agencies have discovered 432 bodies of civilians in the recently liberated parts of the Kherson region, as well as nine apparent Russian torture facilities. We urge Russia to immediately stop such criminal practices.

7. During the Ministerial Council, and especially during an important and timely side event on accountability, it was clear that the international community is determined that justice will be administered for the victims of Russia's heinous acts in Ukraine. A significant number of Ministers reaffirmed their determination to explore all avenues of accountability and prosecution in order to ensure that there is no impunity for any international crimes committed during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In addition, several Ministers called for the establishment of an international tribunal regarding the crime of aggression against Ukraine. The European Union is crystal clear that Russia bears full responsibility for this war and that all responsible for this illegal war and any crimes committed during it must be held to account.

8. We condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and urge Russia to immediately stop it. We demand that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. In addition, we urge the Belarusian authorities to refrain from any further involvement in Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine as well as to immediately stop allowing its territory to serve as a launchpad for attacks against Ukraine, which is an aggression in itself. Belarus must also stop providing military support to Russia. We reiterate that any further actions and, in particular, any direct involvement of the Belarusian military in Russia's war of aggression will be met by new and strong restrictive measures.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Countries BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA* and GEORGIA, and 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.

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