



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1375 Vienna, 26 May 2022

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

1. Mr Chair, as Russia's brutal war against Ukraine drags on, we see more and more attempts to establish long-term illegal structures in Ukraine. Russia attempts to replace the democratically elected and legitimate Ukrainian administration with its own illegal "puppet" structures within the areas currently under its military control and to legitimise these through so-called "census" and possible illegal "referenda". Such a pretended "census" has been pursued in the Kherson region, where people were obliged to register their personal data, and similar actions are reportedly planned in the parts of the Zaporizhzhia region currently under Russian military control. The EU condemns Russia's attempts to legitimise its illegal seizure of Ukrainian sovereign territory. This is in clear violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and we will not recognise such actions.
2. Other attempts to "*russify*" Ukrainian territories under Russian military control include the introduction of Russian standards across the political, social, economic and monetary spheres. At the same time, the humanitarian situation is deteriorating in these areas, as there is a scarcity of basic goods, including food and medicine, and services. Meanwhile, Russia's invasion has also resulted in a serious deterioration in the human rights situation for the local population, which faces violations and abuses, including summary executions, torture, sexual violence, arbitrary detentions as well as restrictions to freedom of movement and freedom of expression. We condemn these illegal attempts to integrate Ukrainian territories into Russia and call on Russia to respect the human rights and safeguard the fundamental freedoms of the people of Ukraine.

3. Moreover, the European Union condemns the reported forced deportations of Ukrainian citizens, including children, to Russia, Russia-controlled territories or Belarus through so-called “filtration camps”. Eyewitness accounts from these camps describe poor conditions with a shortage of food and sanitation equipment. People are reportedly subjected to intrusive body searches by Russian officials, intimidating interrogations and the scanning of mobile phones. The EU condemns in the strongest terms these illegal and inhumane arbitrary detentions and treatment of civilians.
4. Furthermore, the EU strongly condemns the detention of national SMM Mission members by Russia-backed armed formations in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. This is completely unacceptable. We call on Russia to take up its responsibility as participating State of this Organization and ensure the immediate release of those remaining in detention. The SMM national Mission members are still under OSCE functional legal protection despite the fact that the SMM mandate has not been extended.
5. Alongside these attempts to illegally impose long-term Russian structures in Ukraine, Russia is continuing its war of aggression against Ukraine and Ukrainian people. We receive more and more reports about Russia’s continued killings or wounding of civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure and cultural sites, recently in the Luhansk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. The Russian army are using weapons, such as artillery, missiles, multiple launch rockets systems, mortars, air bombs, as well as illegal cluster munitions in attacks on civilians. The authorities in Mariupol report about a devastating humanitarian situation, lack of fresh water and danger of infectious diseases, in particular due to decomposition of dead bodies. We are extremely worried that Russia is replicating the tactics used in Mariupol to encircle, besiege, and destroy other cities, including Sieverodonetsk and Lysychansk, with no mercy for civilian lives and infrastructure. In addition, we continue monitoring the situation of the evacuated Ukrainian service men from Mariupol and reiterate the need to treat prisoners of war in accordance with International Humanitarian Law.

6. The European Union condemns Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We also reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations.

7. The European Union supports all measures to ensure accountability, including by using all tools available within the OSCE. The report by the OSCE Moscow Mechanism expert Mission was an important first international and independent effort on the collection of evidence displaying a devastating reality of a clear pattern of violations of international humanitarian law, and gross and systematic violations of human rights by the Russian Armed Forces. We also welcome that ODIHR is intensifying its monitoring of violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law by deploying monitors in and around Ukraine. All perpetrators must be held to account and the OSCE has an important role to play in this regard.

8. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is mirrored in its internal repression, where human rights and fundamental freedoms continue to be further constrained. We heard many representatives of civil society during last week's second Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting describing the worrying situation within Russia. Academic freedom is also being targeted, with lectures not in line with the state propaganda cancelled. Additionally, the abuse of legislation forbidding the spread of the truth about Russia's war and the atrocities committed by Russian Forces in Ukraine, together with the penalisation of so-called "discreditation" of the Russian army further stifle any dissent on the part of the Russian population. So far, this law has given rise to over 2000 administrative cases, resulting in high fines, and a large number of criminal cases. We deplore the banning of individuals known to fight for democracy and freedom of expression from entering Russia, and the practice of adding dissenters to the list of foreign agents.

9. The EU will continue to support Ukraine in all possible ways. Since the Russian aggression started, the EU mobilised around EUR 4.1 billion for Ukraine's overall

economic, social and financial resilience in the form of emergency macro-financial assistance, budget support, military assistance, emergency assistance, crisis response and humanitarian aid. We have also started working on a financial plan for Ukraine's long-term reconstruction. We will continue to stand in full solidarity with and actively support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people until they prevail.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, MONACO 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.