



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1421 Vienna, 4 May 2023

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

1. Mr Chair, it has been over 14 months since Russia, with the complicity of the Belarusian regime, launched an illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against its peaceful neighbour, Ukraine. With its war, Russia has been flagrantly violating all conceivable norms and principles of international law, including those enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, which constitutes the founding document of the OSCE.
2. Last Friday, 28th April, Russia launched another large-scale aerial attack on Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kyiv. Fortunately, Ukraine's air defence systems intercepted most of the missiles, underscoring the importance of Ukraine being equipped with modern air defence systems. Nevertheless, several missiles struck residential areas in Dnipro and Uman - a Hasidic Jewish pilgrimage centre. In Dnipro, a woman and a 3-year-old child were reportedly killed, while in Uman, a multi-story residential building was hit, resulting in the deaths of at least 23 civilians, including six children, and injuring many others. On 1st May, several Russian missiles struck residential areas in Pavlohrad, resulting in the destruction of multiple houses and six schools. The attack reportedly claimed the lives of two civilians and left at least 40 others injured. Yesterday, Russian missiles struck multiple civilian objects in the Kherson region, including a railway station and a grocery store, reportedly killing 23 and injuring 46 civilians. Such attacks exemplify Russia's reckless use of missiles and disregard for civilian casualties. We strongly condemn these heinous attacks and we remain firmly committed to holding all those responsible to account.

3. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine not only undermines the very essence of our daily efforts to enhance security within the OSCE area but is also incompatible with the ideals of dialogue and cooperation. Russia's war of aggression, its incessant attacks against Ukraine's critical civilian infrastructure, coupled with its relentless propaganda machinery are antithetical to rebuilding trust. Russia and Belarus must stop impeding the OSCE's work and return to the responsible behaviour expected of any OSCE participating State.

4. The reprehensible conduct of Russia and Belarus does not render our presence in this room, our activities across all three dimensions of the OSCE or its field missions irrelevant. On the contrary, the OSCE is now more critical than ever – as a robust and principled organisation that defends its founding principles in supporting a fellow participating State, Ukraine, and its people in their rightful self-defence from Russia's brutal war of aggression. We must continue to expose the lies and wrongdoings of the aggressor state, Russia, and must not overlook the atrocious acts committed by the Russian Armed Forces and its proxies in Ukraine. The OSCE must fulfil its vital role in contributing to stopping Russia's war of aggression, restoring peace, and bringing all perpetrators of any international crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression to justice. We remain committed to supporting the OSCE and are convinced that the OSCE structures and autonomous institutions will continue to stand firmly on the side of international law, and OSCE principles and commitments.

5. Mr. Chair, the Support Programme for Ukraine, launched six months ago, is a testament to the close cooperation between the OSCE and Ukrainian authorities. Despite Russia's attempts to block programmatic activities in Ukraine, the EU and Member States are proud donors to the SPU, which supports projects such as humanitarian demining - one of many priority

areas for the EU and a prerequisite for recovery and reconstruction. We look forward to the presentation of these projects to the OSCE participating states and society at large, as was done at the event on the OSCE's support to Ukraine's constitutionalism, organised by the Lublin Triangle countries earlier this week.

6. As part of our response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU and bordering Member States established in May 2022 the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes for transporting grain from Ukraine to the rest of the world via land routes and trains. Since August 2022, the UN Black Sea Grain Initiative has helped to revive grain shipments from Ukraine's Black Sea ports, contributing to a global reduction in food prices and easing the burden for some of the world's most food-insecure countries. So far, 32 million tonnes of Ukrainian agricultural goods have been exported via road, rail, and Black Sea and Danube ports. We urge Russia to not impede the extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and to fully comply with the conditions agreed. Any disruption to the export of Ukrainian grain to those most in need worldwide will solely be Russia's responsibility. We reject Russia's continuous disinformation activities about the nature of the UN Black Sea Grain Initiative that distort the facts.
7. The EU will continue standing with Ukraine and its people for as long as it is necessary to help Ukraine to rightfully defend itself and restore its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We are united and determined in our support, which is comprehensive and of unprecedented scale, encompassing political, humanitarian and reconstruction aid, as well as financial, legal, and military assistance.
8. The EU remains committed to supporting Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction in coordination with international partners. We fully support the establishment of an international mechanism to register damages

inflicted by Russia. Together with partners, the EU will continue to work towards the use of Russia's frozen and immobilised assets for Ukraine's reconstruction and reparation purposes, in accordance with EU and international law. The principle of the "aggressor pays the damage" must be upheld.

9. The EU reiterates its support for President Zelenskyy's initiative for a just peace. We will continue working with Ukraine on the 10-point peace plan. However, Russia has not shown any willingness to cease its hostilities, withdraw its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, and work towards a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace. The Kremlin is doubling down on its brutal aggression, using irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, without abandoning its goal of subjugating Ukraine and undermining its statehood and independence. We reiterate that any diplomatic solution to end Russia's illegal war of aggression must be based on full respect for international law and its rules, norms and principles, including those enshrined in the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Paris Charter.

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