



## EUROPEAN UNION

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

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Mr Chair, last week our Foreign Ministers gathered in Łódź for the **Ministerial Council**. Unsurprisingly, these high-level deliberations were overshadowed by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The resounding **condemnation** of Russia's **unprovoked, unjustified, brutal and illegal actions** by the overwhelming majority of participants was **loud and clear**. In fact, what Russia did, and continues to do, is **the most critical threat to our common security** and an affront to the rules-based international order and everything we work for here at the OSCE. This is why we remain **as resolute as ever to stand with** Ukraine and to defend the values and principles of this Organisation and its ability to act despite Russia's actions.

When starting his invasion of Ukraine **President Putin set out to grab territory, deprive it of sovereignty, independence, and its national identity and turn what remained of it into a failed state**. This plan never had a chance of succeeding. We had forewarned Russia of the **severe implications of such a strategic mistake** but Russia did not heed our warnings, **rejected diplomacy** and deliberately **chose the path of war and violence, causing immense human suffering**. The political, economic and reputational costs for Russia are evident. We will continue imposing high costs on Russia for its illegal aggression as long as necessary.

Mr Chair, yesterday Ukraine marked the Day of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Today, we salute their courage and resilience in the face of Russia's aggression.

In the FSC meeting on 11 May, the Head of the Russian delegation hailed the advance of the Russian forces on Avdiivka and Niu-York. Now, seven months later, Avdiivka and Niu-York are still free, effectively resisting the aggressor. In the meantime, the Ukrainian Armed Forces launched **successful counter-offensives, liberating large swathes of territories**, including around Kyiv, and in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions. Although about 18% of its sovereign territory still remains under temporary illegal Russian occupation and military control, Ukraine has already reclaimed more than half of the land that Russia had captured since 24 February 2022. This undeniable achievement is a **testimony to the bravery and efforts** of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and Ukrainian people. It also shows the **importance of continued international support** to Ukraine, in its inherent right to defend itself against Russia's unprovoked aggression and to restore its territorial integrity. No use of force, no illegal sham referenda shall ever change the status of sovereignty and territorial integrity under international law.

In recent weeks, **Russia resorted to punitive actions against Ukrainian civilians** after its obvious setbacks on the battlefield. The liberated areas across Ukraine continue to reveal grim examples of atrocities committed by the Russian aggressors. Throughout the liberated areas, bodies of tortured and killed civilians were found on the streets, in homes and in mass graves. Critical energy and water infrastructure have become deliberate targets. Such attacks are especially cowardly, inhumane and intolerable, in particular in winter conditions, as **they attempt to terrorise, harm and demoralise civilians**. They will certainly not break the Ukrainian desire for freedom nor weaken our resolve to support Ukraine against such cynical actions. Intentionally directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects constitutes a war crime. Compliance with international humanitarian law must be an absolute.

Mr Chair, the immense human suffering inflicted by Russia in Ukraine must be diligently documented and those responsible prosecuted. **Accountability is key** to preventing further violations and acts of aggression. This was the topic of the high-level side event in the margins of the Ministerial Council in Łódź dedicated to "Joint Actions for Ending Russia's Impunity and Delivering Justice for Victims. At that meeting, HR/VP Josep Borrell reiterated the EU's **support to ensure accountability for any possible war crimes and crimes against humanity** and for efforts to ensure **accountability for the crime of aggression**.

The European Union and its Member States **remain unwavering in their support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity** within its internationally recognised borders and its inherent right to self-defence. We have already mobilised circa EUR **19.7 billion of assistance to Ukraine**. An additional package of EUR 18 billion has been proposed for 2023. The estimated Union and Member States' **military assistance is close to EUR 9 billion**. This includes **the EU Military Assistance Mission** for Ukraine, which is already providing training to Ukrainian soldiers. Moreover, the European Peace Facility financed the Cyber Lab on Defence that opened last Friday in Kyiv. It will help to develop the skills needed to defend Ukraine from continuous malicious cyber-attacks.

In conclusion, we **urge Russia to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops** and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We also **urge the Belarusian authorities to refrain from any further involvement** in and support for Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and, in particular, to immediately stop providing military support to Russia and allowing its territory to serve as a staging ground for attacks against Ukraine, which is an act of aggression in itself.

Thank you.

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

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