



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1400 Vienna, 24 November 2022

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

1. Mr Chair, today is exactly 9 months since the start of Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. It is also almost two weeks since the Ukrainian flag was raised again in Kherson following its liberation and we have all seen coverage on how the Ukrainian Armed Forces were hailed by the local population. Families have been reunited again. Ukrainian administration and law-enforcement bodies, mobile telephony, postal services and retail have been reinstated. National train lines are again operational there. We commend the resistance, courage and resilience shown by the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the Ukrainian population; over half of the areas that Russia has been trying to hold under military control, since the start of its brutal war of aggression on 24 February, have already been liberated. Russia's attempts to illegally annex Ukraine's territory are clearly in vain and against the population's will. Ukraine will prevail. We will continue to support Ukraine to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity for as long as it takes and we remain determined to support Ukraine's relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.
2. Mr Chair, it is despicable that Russia is seemingly taking revenge for its military losses through constant violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and ruthless attacks that are deliberately targeting civilians and destroying civilian objects and critical infrastructure, such as energy infrastructure and water supply. Russia is working hard through disinformation campaigns to depict itself as a victim that is allegedly threatened by other countries. Let us be crystal clear: Russia is the aggressor State that is persistently and blatantly violating international humanitarian law in desperate attempts to weaken Ukraine's morale.

3. The European Union remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and its inherent right to self-defence. This is why the EU has decided to set up a Military Assistance Mission that will strengthen the military capability of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to safeguard Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty as well as to protect the civilian population. It will provide training to up to 15 000 Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel over multiple locations in the territory of EU Member States. In addition, the EU has adopted an assistance measure to finance the provision of ammunition, military equipment and platforms. The EU will continue to stand with Ukraine.

4. We 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. 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. The situation at the Power Plant remains increasingly "dangerous, precarious and challenging", as described by the IAEA Director General. Each of the seven indispensable pillars for nuclear safety and security has been compromised following Russia's full-scale military invasion. We urge Russia to stop pressuring the Ukrainian operating staff and immediately release those who are detained. We also urge Russia to implement the IAEA Board of Governors resolutions, including the resolution adopted on 16 November 2022 calling the Russian Federation *inter alia* to immediately withdraw its military and other personnel from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. We support the Director General's efforts to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the Power Plant. The competent Ukrainian authorities must regain full control over all nuclear facilities within Ukraine's internationally recognised borders in order to ensure their safe and secure operation.

5. The EU warmly welcomes the renewal of the UN Black Sea Grain initiative. It remains vital to continue to drive global food prices down and ensuring food security worldwide, especially in the most vulnerable countries. The EU underlines the efforts to facilitate the continuation of the UN brokered deal agreed in Istanbul on 22 of July 2022. Food should never be used as a weapon of war. While Russia is engaging in campaigns to manipulate

information and spread propaganda, we have always been clear that our sanctions do not target the trade in agricultural and food products, including grain and fertiliser, between Russia and third countries. The EU and its Member States will continue to respond to the global food security crisis and support timely and stable delivery of Ukrainian agricultural products to global markets.

6. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which is a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, did not start abruptly in February this year - it is part of a long pattern of Russian aggression and destabilising activities against Ukraine. Last week, the District Court of The Hague sentenced the accused Mr Kharchenko, Mr Dubinskiy and Mr Girkin to life imprisonment for causing the crash of Flight MH17 and the murder of the 298 people on board. Defendant Mr Pulatov has been acquitted. The EU reiterates its call on Russia to accept its responsibility in this tragedy and to cooperate fully with the ongoing investigations. This verdict is an important step on the path of truth and accountability.
7. We condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and urge Russia to immediately bring it to an end. We demand that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraws 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 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 and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

