



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council 1411 Vienna, 16 February 2023

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

1. The European Union and its Member States stand united and in full solidarity with Ukraine, which is exercising its inherent right to self-defence against Russia's war of aggression, in accordance with international law, notably Article 51 of the UN Charter. We again commend the courage and determination of the Ukrainian people in their fight to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and freedom of Ukraine. Ukraine has the right to liberate and regain full control of all occupied territories within its internationally recognised borders, including Crimea.
2. Our leaders conveyed a clear message of unity and solidarity with Ukraine to President Zelenskyy during their joint meeting at the European Council held on 9 February in Brussels. Our commitment to continue supporting Ukraine and the Ukrainian people against Russia's ongoing war of aggression for as long as it takes remains unshakeable. This includes political, military, financial and humanitarian support. Our overall assistance to Ukraine and its people amounts so far to at least EUR 67 billion.
3. Next week marks one year since Russia started its illegal, unjustifiable and unprovoked full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. What many in Moscow had hoped would be "a small and victorious war" has turned into prolonged bloodshed and devastation. We underline Russia's full responsibility for all of the reprehensible acts it has carried out in Ukraine over the last year, including serious violations of international law. This war is a threat to European and global security and stability and an enormous human tragedy. We once again condemn Russia, as well as its accomplice Belarus, for its shameful war of aggression.
4. Last Friday and throughout the weekend, Russia's Armed Forces carried out another large-scale missile and drone attack against Ukrainian cities, where critical infrastructure and residential areas were again targeted. On 10 February, at least 17 S-300 missiles

reportedly hit Zaporizhzhia –the biggest missile attack since the beginning of Russia’s invasion. Dnipro, Kherson and Kharkiv were also heavily targeted. During the attack on 10 February, Russian cruise missiles again violated the airspace of the Republic of Moldova. This unacceptable, reckless act is yet another violation of international law by Russia.

5. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia’s persisting heinous attacks against residential buildings, school and medical facilities, religious sites, and against Ukraine’s critical infrastructure, notably its energy, heating and water supply systems. Deliberate targeting of civilians or civilian objects is a war crime. We condemn Russia’s continued human rights violations and remain deeply concerned by the particularly disturbing accounts of unlawful forcible transfers and deportations of children to the Russian Federation and Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by Russia. The European Union is firmly committed to holding to account all commanders, perpetrators and accomplices of war crimes and the other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. The European Union fully supports Ukraine’s and the international community’s efforts in this respect, including the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for the prosecution of the crime of aggression, which is of concern to the international community as a whole. We underline our support for the investigations by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court as well as for the creation, in The Hague, of an international centre for the prosecution of the crime of aggression against Ukraine. This centre will be linked to the existing Joint Investigation Team supported by Eurojust.
6. The European Union reiterates its readiness to support Ukraine’s initiative for a just peace based on respect for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. To date, Russia has not shown any genuine willingness regarding a fair and sustainable peace. We express our support for the peace formula of President Zelenskyy and reaffirm the European Union’s commitment to work actively with Ukraine on the 10-point peace plan.
7. The EU remains gravely concerned about the deteriorating situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, illegally annexed by Russia. The most recent prison deaths of Ukrainian citizens, illegally imprisoned by the Russian occupation authorities in Crimea, must immediately be

investigated. We also condemn the reported cases of persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Crimea.

8. We reiterate our call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained OSCE staff members, and to return all OSCE SMM armoured vehicles, stolen by Russia, to their legitimate owner, all OSCE participating States. We fully support all OSCE efforts in this regard.
9. Russia accompanies its aggression against Ukraine with information operations. Its aggressive war propaganda and disinformation include attempting to justify or deny atrocities, normalising occupation, and shifting the blame for inflation and the global food and energy crises on countries that support Ukraine in its inherent right to self-defence. In this context, allow us to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the first EEAS report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) Threats. In this report, Russia's tactics in support of its war of aggression through disinformation and interference activities against Ukraine and the EU Member States are extensively described. The report also details how Russia's diplomatic channels regularly serve as enablers of FIMI operations.
10. To conclude, 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 stop enabling Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, by permitting Russian armed forces to use Belarusian territory and by providing support and training to the Russian military. The Belarusian regime must fully abide by its obligations under international law. The EU will continue to respond to all actions supporting Russia's unlawful and unjustified war of aggression and remains ready to move quickly with further restrictive measures against Belarus.

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.