



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1419 Vienna, 20 April 2023

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

1. Mr. Chair, Russia has been waging an illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine for 421 days now. Over the Orthodox Easter weekend, a Russian missile struck another residential multi-storey building in Sloviansk, leaving at least 15 civilians dead and 24 injured. Two women, a mother and her daughter, were also killed by a Russian missile that hit Kherson. On 16 April, Orthodox Easter Sunday, Russia struck churches in Komyshevakha and Nikopol, destroying them and injuring two civilians.
2. The EU stands united in full solidarity with Ukraine and its people, who are rightfully and courageously defending themselves against Russia's brutal war of aggression. Ukraine is exercising its inherent right to self-defence in full compliance with international law, notably Article 51 of the UN Charter. Ukraine has the right to liberate and regain full control of all illegally Russian-occupied territories within its internationally recognised borders, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. The EU will continue to support Ukraine and its people, who are defending their democratic future and independence. Let us never forget that, by doing so, they are also defending the values and principles that constitute the foundations of this organisation.
3. Mr. Chair, Russia has shown no sign of complying with the three resolutions adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors in 2022, or the previous consensus resolutions of the IAEA General Conference which state that "any armed attack

on and threat against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes constitutes a violation of the principles of the UN Charter, international law and the Statute of the Agency”. The EU and its Member States will never recognise Russia’s attempted illegal seizure of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). We strongly call on Russia to withdraw all its military equipment and its personnel, including that of ROSATOM from the ZNPP, and return full control to its rightful owner, Ukraine. The EU fully supports the IAEA’s work to assist Ukraine in maintaining nuclear safety and security, and to implement safeguards pursuant to Ukraine’s safeguards obligations. We stress the importance of the IAEA’s continued presence at all Ukraine’s nuclear facilities. We also continue to support the IAEA Director General’s efforts to ensure nuclear safety and security of the ZNPP, in full respect of Ukraine’s sovereignty.

4. Another area that is directly affected by Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine is the security at and around the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov – both at sea and in the air. We thank Ukraine and Romania for organising the First Black Sea Security Conference of the International Crimea Platform in Bucharest last week and look forward to the continued proactive engagement by the OSCE in this area.

5. The EU strongly condemns the mistreatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war by Russia’s military forces and its proxies, including the ‘Wagner’ group. Last week, we witnessed the horrific video apparently showing a Ukrainian soldier being decapitated. Several weeks prior, footage surfaced of the execution of an unarmed Ukrainian serviceman, Oleksandr Matsievskiy. In July 2022, over 50 Ukrainian POWs were killed in an explosion in Olenivka. According to Ukraine’s Ombudsman, these are not isolated incidents and Ukraine has evidence of tens of similar cases. The recent public testimonies by two individuals claiming to be former members of the 'Wagner' group, detailing their killing of civilians, including children in Ukraine, have left us shocked. All those responsible must be held to account. The EU calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations to treat Ukrainian POWs humanely, provide them the protection afforded by

international humanitarian law, and allow immediate access by international humanitarian organisations. International humanitarian law, including on the treatment of prisoners of war, must be respected.

6. We also reiterate our call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release the three OSCE SMM local staff members, who have been illegally detained for over a year now. Russia must also immediately return the stolen OSCE SMM vehicles to their legitimate owners, all OSCE participating States.
7. Mr. Chair, there is no other way to halt the further erosion of European security and the targeting and suffering of the Ukrainian people. Russia must cease its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all military forces, proxies, and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Russia must also immediately ensure the safe return of all Ukrainians illegally and forcibly transferred to Ukrainian territory temporarily and illegally occupied by Russia or deported to Russia, particularly children. All those responsible for war crimes, and other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including those sought by the ICC, will be held accountable and brought to justice. The EU also fully supports Ukraine's and the international community's efforts to establish an appropriate mechanism for the prosecution of the crime of aggression. The EU also condemns the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression provided by Belarus. It urges all countries not to provide material or other support for Russia's war of aggression.
8. 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. Regrettably, we have not seen to date any willingness on Russia's side to cease its hostilities, withdraw entirely its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, and work towards a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace, which has been demanded by the international community through various UN

General Assembly resolutions that have received overwhelming majorities. The Kremlin is only repeating its ultimatums, doubling down on its brutal aggression 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 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.