



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council 1392 Vienna, 6 October 2022

#### **EU Statement on the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, including illegal attempts to legalize the occupation of the eastern Ukraine**

1. Mr. Chair, at the outset, allow me to warmly welcome at the Permanent Council the Head of the Zaporizhzhia Regional Council, Ms Olena Zhuk and thank her for her inspiring remarks. The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's continued attacks on the civilian population and infrastructure in Ukraine as part of its ongoing war of aggression. This includes the attack in Zaporizhzhia, where on 30 September, Russia shelled a convoy of civilian cars, killing at least 31 people, including two children and injuring almost 100.
2. Mr. Chair, eight months into Russia's illegal, senseless and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, President Putin's true imperialistic ambitions when launching the invasion of a peaceful neighbouring country are exposed. Russia's illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol eight years ago was not enough. Instead, the current Russian leadership continues its brutal expansionism and its efforts to deny Ukraine's existence as an independent state. Despite the fact that Russia has already lost this war morally and politically, and is increasingly losing on the battlefield, President Putin has decided to further escalate Russia's war of aggression. We firmly reject and unequivocally condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's attempted illegal annexation of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, which we do not and will not recognise. These actions undermine the rules-based international order and core principles as enshrined in the UN Charter and international law, as well as OSCE principles and commitments. They blatantly violate the fundamental rights of Ukraine to independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia, and Russia alone, bears full responsibility for putting global security at risk.

3. We do not and will never recognise the illegal sham “referenda” nor their falsified and illegal results. Russia has only organised them as a pretext for this further violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. These so-called “referenda”, organised at gunpoint, are null and void and will not produce any legal effect whatsoever. Crimea, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk are Ukraine. Russia, its political leadership, and all those involved in organising these “referenda” will be held accountable, and additional restrictive measures against Russia will be brought forward in coordination with our partners. We will continue to support Ukraine’s effort to restore its territorial integrity for as long as it takes.
4. In line with the UN Charter and international law, Ukraine is exercising its legitimate right to defend itself against the Russian aggression to regain full control of its territory. Ukraine has the right to liberate occupied territories within its internationally recognised borders. We salute the courage and successes of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the ongoing counter-offensive. We will continue supporting these efforts through the provision of military equipment. The Kremlin’s irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, as well as Russia’s military mobilisation and its strategy of seeking to falsely present Ukraine's territory as Russia's will not shake our resolve. Nobody will be deceived by the Kremlin’s poor attempts in purporting that the war is now taking place on Russia's territory.
5. Russia’s disrespect for everything the OSCE stands for is not only visible through its violation of numerous of our commonly agreed principles and commitments, but also through the detention and sentencing of OSCE staff members. We call on Russia to assume its responsibility as an OSCE participating State and to immediately and unconditionally release all OSCE staff members.
6. We continue to be gravely concerned regarding Russia’s actions in and around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant as well as other nuclear objects in Ukraine, which are posing a threat to the safety and security of the nuclear facilities and their personnel and are significantly raising the risk of a nuclear accident. We condemn Russia’s attempts to legitimise its illegal seizure of nuclear facilities in Ukrainian sovereign territory, including President Putin’s recent decree on the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. We were also

shocked that the Director General of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant was detained. The EU fully supports the work of the IAEA and its Director General in assisting Ukraine to ensure nuclear safety and security, and to maintain the implementation of the safeguards. However, the only way to assure the long-term safety and security of the facility is for Russia to withdraw its troops from the ZNPP and return it to full and exclusive Ukrainian control.

7. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine also has a direct negative impact on Russian citizens. We are gravely concerned by the findings put forward in the report under the Moscow Mechanism displaying the systematic restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and opinion. The growing censorship is depriving Russian citizens of their right to independent media sources about Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The grim human rights situation in Russia was also described by many civil society representatives and activists taking part in the ongoing Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, some of them at a great personal cost. The EU deplores the sentences against former journalist Ivan Safronov and Moscow municipal deputy Alexei Gorinov and calls for their immediate and unconditional release. We also deplore the charges brought forward against the opposition politician Leonid Gozman for criticising the Russian leadership, the continued detention of Vladimir Kara-Murza and Ilya Yashin as well as the continued persecution of other Russian citizens who dare to speak up against the Kremlin's war of aggression against Ukraine. We are equally concerned by the detention of peaceful protesters who demonstrate on the streets of Russia against the mobilisation and again call on Russia to abide by its commitments regarding freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly.
8. The EU remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and demands that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, including the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and urge Russia to immediately stop its illegal aggression and reiterate our call on the Belarusian authorities to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by their international obligations.

We will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes.

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

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