



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1384
Vienna, 28 July 2022**

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

1. Mr. Chair, today as Ukraine celebrates the Day of Ukrainian Statehood, we congratulate Ukraine and the Ukrainian people for their heroic resistance against the unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression launched by the Russian Federation. This war, which has already lasted more than five months, is an illegal and brutal use of force under international law and a blatant breach of the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments, which the European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms.
2. Russia has unleashed unspeakable human suffering on Ukrainians. The atrocities committed by the invader continue to be diligently documented. The findings of the two Mission reports under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism and the recent interim ODIHR report show the grave breaches by the Russian Armed Forces of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Those responsible for these abuses and violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity must and will be held to account.
3. One of the abhorrent practices undertaken by Russia are the so-called "filtration camps" where families are separated, and those who are deemed "unreliable" disappear. Yesterday, we listened to the heart-breaking first-hand testimonies of some of those who managed to survive the filtration process and those who are still missing their family members. A research project on the subject was also presented that showed the extent of this practice which we once again strongly condemn. Torture and inhuman treatment is prohibited under all circumstances under international law. This event was another loud cry for accountability for the perpetrators of these and other crimes committed in the

course of Russia's ongoing war of aggression. We will spare no efforts until justice prevails.

4. We are horrified by the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on children. Boys and girls have been traumatised, wounded and killed. Schools across Ukraine have been targeted by heavy artillery, air strikes and other explosive weapons, or used for military purposes. As a result, children are at particular risk of denial of humanitarian access, abduction, trafficking, forced deportations and illegal adoption, sexual exploitation and separation from their families. Unaccompanied minors and separated children are especially vulnerable in this regard. We are deeply concerned about the reports of forcible deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia since its invasion. Efforts need to be stepped up to protect children impacted by Russia's illegal aggression and the EU and its Member States, in cooperation with UNHCR, UNICEF and other relevant bodies, continue to ensure that a prompt and concrete response to the needs of children and their families is provided for. Russia must end its violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including its grave violations against children in Ukraine.

5. Mr. Chair, as stated multiple times by us and other Delegations in this Council, one of the most dramatic ripple effects of this war is the impact on the global food situation. Russia's blockade of Ukrainian ports, targeting Ukrainian infrastructure and deliberate setting Ukraine's harvest on fire have exacerbated the global food crisis and risks bringing millions of people across the world to the brink of famine. Last Friday in Istanbul, thanks to the mediation efforts of the United Nations and the host country, separate agreements were reached to allow for the resumption of export of Ukrainian grain. Their success will depend on the swift and good faith implementation. Unfortunately, less than 24 hours after the signatures, Russia again attacked the seaport in Odesa, the main artery for the Ukrainian agriculture export. We strongly condemn this cynical attack, which once again demonstrates Russia's total disregard for international law and commitments made, and urge Russia to fulfil its part of the Istanbul agreements.

6. Mr. Chair, amidst the ongoing fully-fledged military hostilities, we shall not forget that Russia's aggression against Ukraine actually started more than eight years ago, when, in February 2014, Russia covertly deployed soldiers without insignia to the Crimean

peninsula and organised an illegal referendum. The European Union's position remains consistent. We condemn and do not recognise the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. This was a major violation by Russia of international law and a blatant breach of OSCE principles and commitments.

7. Since then, we have witnessed an intensified militarisation of the peninsula. The illegally annexed Crimea has become a springboard for further military aggression. The human rights situation has also significantly deteriorated. Residents of Crimea, in particular Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and persons belonging to ethnic and religious communities face systematic restrictions of their fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, religion or belief and association and the right to peaceful assembly. Journalists, human rights defenders and lawyers face interference and intimidation in their work.
8. The recent statement of Foreign Minister Lavrov about the changing geographical objectives of Russia's war of aggression and the toppling of Ukraine's legitimate government were yet further proof of Russia's purposeful and clear intention to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty. They show the real purpose of Russia's illegitimate and unprovoked aggression on Ukraine and that this war is nothing else but a brutal territorial conquest. Russia's despicable strategy was also tried in Donbas. The Russian Federation should not assume that we would ever recognise any illegal entities or annexation of territory in Ukraine or elsewhere.
9. On a final note, we again urge Russia to ensure that the three local OSCE staff members detained in non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine are released immediately and unconditionally.
10. The European Union calls on Russia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and to immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We also reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations.

We stand with Ukraine.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE and REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Country 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 and continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.