



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No.1461 Vienna, 15 February 2024

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

1. Madame Chair, last Friday night Russia again resorted to its deplorable tactics of terrorising innocent Ukrainian civilians with its targeted attacks on civilian objects and infrastructure in its unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression. A Russian drone strike on Kharkiv caused a huge explosion. As a result, seven people were killed, including 3 children, and 57 local residents were left without a home. We strongly condemn these continuous barbaric attacks by Russia and we pay tribute to the innocent civilians that were killed in them.
2. Also, Ukraine Black Sea port infrastructure was again hit by Russia in the past days, in close proximity to the borders of EU Member States. We urge Russia to refrain from any escalatory steps in the Black Sea area.
3. At the same time, concurring reports have pointed to evidence of ill-treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war held in the territories, temporarily and illegally occupied by Russia, and in Russia. These reports, documented by ODIHR, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Ukraine, as well as by the missions of experts under the Moscow Mechanism and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, mention instances of violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The reported violations range from torture and ill-treatment to sexual violence,

unlawful confinements and mock executions. Torture is assessed to be widely used by Russian forces as a systematic practice in detention to extract information and confessions, to force victims to cooperate with the occupying authorities or simply as a means of punishment or dehumanisation.

4. The recent informal meeting, which the Delegations of the EU, Ukraine and the US to the OSCE organised on 13th February to address Russia's captivity of servicemen-defenders of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, has sadly corroborated the findings of the above mentioned reports. The harrowing testimonies we heard during the event have shed more light on the inhumane conditions and degrading treatment which accompany Russian captivity.
5. Faced with this grim reality, we will not tire into demanding that Russia fully comply with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The rights and fundamental freedoms of prisoners of war and civilians in the temporarily and illegally occupied territories of Ukraine must be respected. We demand the immediate release of all persons, unlawfully deprived of their liberty, including the three arbitrarily detained OSCE staff members.
6. And let us again be clear – there will be no escape for any perpetrators and accomplices of crimes committed as part of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The pursuit for accountability and justice for all such crimes, including for the crime of aggression, as well as for the massive damage caused by Russia in its war of aggression, will remain a key priority for the EU.
7. Turning to the issue of nuclear safety and security, we welcome the recent fourth visit by IAEA DG Grossi to Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). The visit underlined the continuously precarious situation at the plant, due to Russia's war of aggression. We again call on Russia to immediately cease all military operations against and in the ZNPP, to

withdraw its troops and military equipment from the power plant and to hand it back to its rightful owner, Ukraine.

8. We will continue to stand with Ukraine and its brave and resilient people for as long as it takes, for Ukraine to rightfully defend itself against Russia's brutal war of aggression and to win the just and lasting peace it deserves. To this end, we will continue to provide Ukraine with strong political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support.
9. Moreover, the EU remains committed to supporting Ukraine's repair, recovery and reconstruction, in coordination with international partners, including the demining process and psychosocial rehabilitation. In this context, we take positive note of the Conference on the Reconstruction of Ukraine, taking place today in Athens, organised by Greece in cooperation with the European Investment Bank, focusing on construction, transport/logistics, energy, IT, start-ups and health, and with the participation of high-level officials by the EU and the Ukrainian Government.
10. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU and its Member States will continue their intensive global outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and partners from all regions of the world to ensure the widest possible international support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace and the key principles and objectives of Ukraine's Peace Formula, based on the UN Charter, with a view to a future Global Peace Summit.
11. In conclusion, we once again demand that Russia immediately stop its unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We also condemn the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine provided by Belarus, as well as Iran and the DPRK. We urge all countries not to provide material or other support for Russia's war of aggression, which is a blatant violation of

international law, including the UN Charter, and the OSCE's core principles and commitments.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, 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.

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