



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1394 Vienna, 13 October 2022

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

1. The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent heinous and cowardly attacks on Ukrainians and civilian objects and infrastructure in many Ukrainian cities by the Russian Armed Forces. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians or civilian objects without distinction, as well as intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such, or against individual civilians not taking part in hostilities, is prohibited under international humanitarian law and amounts to war crimes. Targeting critical civilian infrastructure by the Russian Armed Forces, indispensable to the survival of civilians, including infrastructure related to electricity and water, which aims to hamper the lives of civilians in the longer term, is also prohibited under international humanitarian law. These attacks must be stopped immediately.
2. We are appalled by the almost daily attacks on residential areas in Zaporizhzhia. This Monday, the missile attacks by Russian armed forces, which struck many cities across Ukraine, left at least 12 civilians dead and more than 100 injured in Kyiv, Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia, and in Kyiv, Sumy and other regions. Moreover, on Tuesday, when a Special PC meeting was held to address these barbaric attacks, Russia launched another massive wave of rockets and UAVs against civilian targets in Ukraine. We express our deepest condolences to the victims of the Russian attacks, their families and the Ukrainian people.
3. We are also shocked by the discovery of the bodies of two men who had been tortured and killed on a premises used as a base by Russian special forces in Novoplatonivka village in Kharkiv region. About 50 graves have been found in recently liberated Lyman in the Donetsk region. These are only two examples of the many reports we receive about

torture and killings of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian Armed Forces. There can be no impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocity crimes. Those responsible must be held accountable and brought to justice. We welcome and support the ongoing work to investigate war crimes and other atrocity crimes. In this sense, the two reports under the Moscow Mechanism are a valuable contribution.

4. The EU firmly rejects and unequivocally condemns Russia's illegal attempts to annex Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, which followed the sham "referenda" conducted on 23-27 September at gunpoint. The outcome of the sham "referenda" is null and void and cannot produce any legal effect as they blatantly violate international law, Ukraine's Constitution and its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will never recognise those areas as anything but a part of Ukraine. Moreover, there are signs of widespread and systematic abuses of human rights and intimidation of Ukrainian citizens, so these illegal so-called "votes" can in no way be expressions of the free will of the people of these regions of Ukraine. The EU welcomes, in this regard, the UNGA resolution on the "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations" adopted yesterday with an overwhelming support of votes.
5. Unfortunately, this attempted illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory is neither the first nor an isolated step - Russia's brutal expansionism and its efforts to deny Ukraine's existence as an independent state is an extension and a replication of Russia's illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula in 2014. We are deeply concerned by reports that Russia is now forcibly conscripting Ukrainians, including Crimean Tatars, in the Ukrainian territories that are illegally proclaimed as annexed by Russia, to fight against their own homeland. We remind Russia that this is prohibited under international law. We also reiterate our call on Russia to assume its responsibility as an OSCE participating State and to immediately and unconditionally release all OSCE staff members.
6. Moreover, the European Union strongly condemns the decree of the Russian President Putin on the attempted illegal seizure of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, its placement under Russian administration and the establishment of a government enterprise in that regard. This decree is null and void. Russia must fully withdraw its military forces and equipment and hand back control of the nuclear power plant to its

rightful owner, Ukraine. We also condemn the reported kidnapping of the Deputy Director of the power plant, Mr Valeriy Martynyuk, and demand his immediate and unconditional release. The seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security must be fully adhered to and be respected and a continued IAEA presence at the site with unhindered access must be maintained. In addition, we reiterate our condemnation of Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric.

7. At the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, we heard heart-breaking first-hand reports about Russia's systematic killings, torture, harassment, sexual assaults and kidnapping of civilians in Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest terms. We congratulate the laureates of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize; the Ukrainian human rights organisation Center for Civil Liberties; Ales Bialiatski, a human rights defender and founder of the Human Rights Center Viasna in Belarus, and the Russian human rights organisation Memorial, and we are honoured to have listened to representatives of these organisations in Warsaw. The decision to award this year's Nobel Peace Prize to these champions of democracy and human rights is a sign of hope and light amidst the darkness of Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and the internal repression in Russia and Belarus. It recognises the outstanding courage and the true power of civil society in standing up for democracy and against autocracy.
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. We urge the Belarusian authorities to refrain from any further involvement in Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and, in particular, to immediately stop allowing the territory of Belarus to serve as a launchpad for attacks against Ukraine and Ukrainian civilians. Any further actions and, in particular, any direct involvement of the Belarusian military into Russia's war of aggression, will be met by new and strong restrictive measures.

9. As Ukraine marks the Day of Ukraine's defenders tomorrow, the EU stands united in its solidarity with Ukraine and its people, who are courageously defending their homeland and exercising their right of self-defence. We will continue to support them together with our international partners, including through additional political, financial, and humanitarian support. Last week, after close coordination with its international partners, the EU agreed on an eighth package of hard-hitting sanctions against Russia for its aggression against Ukraine as a response to Russia's continued escalation and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

We will continue to 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.