



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council No.1448 Vienna, 2 November 2023**

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

1. On 23<sup>rd</sup> October we celebrated the United Nations Day, commemorating the founding principles and values of the UN Charter, core principles shared with the OSCE. These principles remain as valid today as they did 78 years ago. Yet one country, Russia, has systematically and deliberately violated them through its illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against its sovereign, peaceful neighbour – Ukraine.
2. Russia's relentless targeting of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, including agriculture and energy facilities, blatantly violates fundamental provisions of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In just the past two weeks, Russia's attacks, including those on a residential building in Zaporizhzhia and the Nova Poshta sorting office in Kharkiv, took the lives of twelve civilians and left at least 66 others injured. As stated by EU leaders in the latest European Council Conclusions, the EU and its Member States will intensify the provision of humanitarian and civil protection assistance to Ukraine to help it and its people face yet another winter at war due to the Russian Federation's reckless actions.
3. EU Leaders also confirmed strong financial, economic, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes. In particular, the European Union and its Member States will continue to provide sustainable military support to Ukraine. In the longer term, the EU and Member States will contribute, together with partners, to future security

commitments to Ukraine, which will help Ukraine defend itself, resist destabilisation efforts and deter acts of aggression in the future.

4. In the early hours of 24<sup>th</sup> October, Russian drones caused explosions that shook an area near Ukraine's Khmel'nitsky Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), shattering many windows at the site and temporarily cutting power to some off-site radiation monitoring stations. As stated by the IAEA Director General, this incident underlines the extremely precarious nuclear safety situation in Ukraine, which will continue as long as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine goes on. Russia must immediately cease all actions endangering the safety and security of civilian nuclear facilities in Ukraine and withdraw from Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia NPP, returning its control to the competent Ukrainian authorities.
  
5. The latest report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (the Commission), published on 20<sup>th</sup> October, provides further evidence of Russia's illegal practices in Ukraine, ranging from indiscriminate attacks, torture, rape and sexual violence to deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children to Russia, Belarus or within areas Russia temporarily and illegally occupies in Ukraine. All of these acts have been rightfully described by the Commission as war crimes subject to international persecution. The latest European Council Conclusions reaffirm that Russia and its leadership must be held fully accountable for waging a war of aggression against Ukraine and other most serious crimes under international law. Work will continue, including in the Core Group, on efforts to establish a tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression against Ukraine that would enjoy the broadest cross-regional support and legitimacy, and towards the establishment of a future compensation mechanism.
  
6. Russia's external aggression is mirrored by increasingly violent internal repression of dissenting voices, including against those who continue to work on the remembrance of past victims and against attempts to

manipulate and erase the historical memory of political repression in the country. The dismantling of organisations, such as the Russian human rights organisation *Memorial*, is an irreplaceable loss for the Russian people and the rest of Europe. The number of political prisoners in Russia is increasing, exceeding 600 persons according to *Memorial*, in violation of Russia's international commitments and obligations in the field of human rights, including within the OSCE. The increasing harassment of human rights lawyers in Russia is yet another deeply concerning negative trend. Lawyers have a fundamental role in upholding the rule of law and the human rights of defendants and should be allowed to practice their profession safely and without fear. The EU deplors the detention of three of Alexei Navalny's lawyers and reiterates its call for their immediate release. The human rights situation in Belarus also continues to deteriorate, demonstrating the interlinkages between the regime's internal repression and its complicity in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Many Belarusians have been unlawfully detained or imprisoned on politically motivated charges, with the number of political prisoners estimated at around 1500 persons. We reiterate our calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners by the Russian and Belarusian authorities.

7. Mr. Chair, the international community's support for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity not only remains strong, but continues to grow. The third meeting of National Security Advisers on Ukraine's Peace Formula that took place in Malta on 28<sup>th</sup> October was the most widely attended so far, with nearly 70 participants. It confirmed international attention towards Ukraine, strong support for a just and lasting peace, based on the principles of the UN Charter and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and concern for the global consequences of Russia's war of aggression, such as radiation and nuclear safety, food security, energy security, and release of prisoners and deported persons, including children. Several OSCE participating States (pS) attended the meeting for the first time and we thank them for

their participation. The EU and its Member States will continue their intensified diplomatic outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and other countries 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, with a view to a Global Peace Summit being held.

8. International support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is also evident in the increasing numbers of participants in the Parliamentary Summits of the Crimea Platform. The second Summit on 24<sup>th</sup> October underlined the importance of restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including the de-occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, and ensuring Ukraine's state sovereignty, as a fundamental prerequisite for ending Russia's war of aggression and establishing lasting peace in the region. We also celebrate the first anniversary of the Support Programme for Ukraine (SPU) demonstrating the commitment of many OSCE pS, including the EU and Member States, to continue supporting Ukraine and preserving vital OSCE activities in the country, despite RU's obstructions.
9. In conclusion, we once again call on Russia to immediately stop its war of aggression, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We also condemn the continued support for Russia's war of aggression provided by the Belarusian authorities and urge all countries not to provide material or other support for this aggression.

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