



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1051 Vienna, 5 July 2023

EU Statement on Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine

Madam Chair, as we approach **the tragic landmark of 500 days** since the Kremlin instigated the largest conventional war in Europe since 1945 against its peaceful neighbor, we must not lose sight of the toll this war has already taken; and that Russia's aggression against Ukraine began back in 2014. Russia's brutal, illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable **war of aggression against Ukraine** has claimed tens of thousands of innocent lives, caused terrible devastation in Ukraine and sent shockwaves throughout the globe. It blatantly violates the UN Charter and international law and goes against fundamental OSCE principles and commitments. No matter how hard Russia tries to hide the facts, we will not cease to condemn this war of aggression and its devastating impact in the strongest possible terms.

The past 500 days bear witness not only to the brutality against civilians and the disregard for the rules-based international order, but also to the **serious misjudgment on the part of the Kremlin**. Recent developments illustrate to everyone, including the people in Russia, the perils and pitfalls of Putin's recklessness. Meanwhile, Ukraine has been remarkably successful in exercising its inherent right for self-defence and repelling the invader, thanks to the resilience, tenacity and determination of its citizens and its armed forces in protecting their homeland, their freedom, and their right to determine their own destiny. In addition to the extensive and abominable destruction wrought by Russia on numerous Ukrainian cities, it is also Russia's own reputation and that of its military which lies in ruins.

We have chosen, in unwavering unity **with our international partners, to stand with Ukraine** by providing it with the means of self-defence in line with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Our support is and remains the correct course of action. Last week, the European Council reconfirmed the EU's readiness to provide sustainable military support to Ukraine for as long as it takes, notably through the EU Military Assistance Mission and the European Peace Facility. This adds to Member States' comprehensive efforts in this regard.

Madam Chair, **the ruthlessness of Russia's war of aggression is shocking.** Last week, Ukrainian civilians were cruelly reminded that death can strike at any moment due to Russia's indiscriminate attacks. Iskander missiles were launched at a bustling restaurant and a shopping center in Kramatorsk, resulting in at least 13 killed, including three young girls and prominent Ukrainian author Victoria Amelina, and injuring over 60 people. This was yet another display of the terror that Russia is inflicting on Ukrainian civilians. Any claims from Russian officials of a legitimate military target are nothing short of cynical.

As long as Russia's brutal war of aggression and the Russian illegal occupation continue, Ukrainians cannot feel safe and secure. Systematic, indiscriminate and deliberate bombings and shelling of Ukrainian cities, the Ukrainian population and critical civilian infrastructure, inhumane treatment of PoWs, and forceful transfer and unlawful deportation of children and other civilians to Russia and Belarus may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and must not be tolerated.

There is a substantial body of evidence, including the OSCE Moscow Mechanism and ODIHR reports, that documents potential war crimes and crimes against humanity. The EU is engaging with Ukraine and international partners to **ensure full accountability** for war crimes and other most serious crimes in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including the crime of aggression. Two days ago, the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine (ICPA) started its operations in the Hague, hosted by Eurojust (the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation). The ICPA is a coordination platform that will provide enhanced support to national investigations and prosecutions of the crime of aggression and contribute to the exchange and analysis of evidence gathered since the start of the Russian aggression. All those responsible must be held to account in accordance with international law.

The atrocities committed by Russian forces in Ukraine must end; the sooner the better for everyone, including for Russia. For the time being, Russia has not shown any genuine willingness regarding negotiations for a fair and sustainable peace. We support **President Zelenskyy's peace formula** and are committed to actively work with Ukraine on the 10-point plan. Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine must be based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

We recall that Russia still **illegally detains three OSCE staff members**. We urge Russia to release them immediately as well as to return the illegally-seized OSCE SMM armoured vehicles.

Russia must also immediately **cease actions endangering the safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine**. The European Union fully supports the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency in this respect. We condemn Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and its announced deployment of nuclear weapons to Belarus. We call on the Belarusian authorities to put an immediate end to their support of Russia's war.

In conclusion, we **call on Russia to stop its war** of aggression and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries NORWAY, ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA 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.