



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1036 Vienna, 15 February 2023

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

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Mr Chair, last Thursday, the European Parliament and the European Council hosted President Zelenskyy in Brussels as a sign of our unwavering support and solidarity to Ukraine in its existential fight against the Russian aggression. The European Council reiterated on this occasion its strongest condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, including the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments. We will continue to remind the Russian delegation of this undeniable truth.

Russia's brutal war of aggression, which has lasted almost a full year, has brought immense suffering and destruction to Ukraine and its people. Last Friday, when President Zelenskyy just returned from Brussels, Russia decided to launch another wave of aerial attacks against Ukrainian cities and the Ukrainian population. Although Ukrainian air defences again intercepted most of the Russian missiles, still, some hit critical civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. We reiterate our strongest condemnation of Russia's persistent heinous attacks against Ukraine's critical infrastructure, notably its energy, heating and water supply systems. Clearly, such despicable strategy, aimed to spread terror among the civilian population, cannot and will not break the resolve of the Ukrainians, bravely defending their lives, their freedom and their future.

We also urge Russia to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all States, including the Republic of Moldova. During the attack on 10 February, Russian cruise missiles violated the Moldovan airspace again. This reckless act is another violation of international law by Russia.

Mr Chair, no one can predict how long Russia's brutal war will last. Let us be clear, Russia started the war, and Russia can stop it right now by withdrawing all its forces from the entire territory of Ukraine. Up until now, Russia has not shown any genuine

willingness to negotiate for a fair and sustainable peace. We support the peace formula of President Zelenskyy and are committed to actively working with Ukraine on the implementation of the 10-point plan.

The EU and its Member States stand unequivocally for international law and the principles and commitments of this Organisation. We resolutely support Ukraine, the victim of Russia's unprovoked war of aggression, in its inherent right to self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. Our political, military, financial and humanitarian assistance will continue for as long as it takes.

With a view to a sustainable and fair peace, accountability is of key importance. We are also engaging with Ukraine and international partners to ensure full accountability for war crimes and the other most serious crimes in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including the crime of aggression. Russia's political and military leadership, and all those responsible for such acts, will be held to account.

As the one-year anniversary of the Moscow's fatal decision to invade its sovereign and peaceful neighbour is approaching, the Russian forces are desperately trying to achieve progress on the battlefield. Russian generals continue to send freshly mobilised soldiers into senseless attacks, with no respect for human lives. We have seen these military tactics around Vuhledar in recent days. And we all here remember how, two weeks ago, the Head of the Russian Delegation boasted in this room that the Ukrainian defences in the same Vuhledar had been broken. Another outlandish claim, similar to many we heard in the past, in particular, a year ago, in February 2022. We thank the colleagues around this table who keep debunking the Russian contradictory narratives in the disinformation and propaganda that the Russian delegation was peddling in this Forum ahead of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and ever since.

We reiterate that Russia must release the three illegally detained OSCE staff members and return the stolen OSCE SMM armoured vehicles to their legitimate owners, all OSCE participating States.

In conclusion, we urge 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 recognised borders. We also urge

the Belarusian authorities to stop their support of and refrain from any further involvement in or facilitation of Russia's illegal war of aggression.

Thank you.

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