



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Reinforced Permanent Council No. 1359 Vienna, 27 February 2022

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

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. By its illegal military actions, Russia is grossly violating international law, the principles of the UN Charter and the OSCE acquis and undermining European and global security and stability. The EU underlines that this includes the inherent right of Ukraine to choose its own future and destiny. Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it is causing. It will be held accountable for its actions.

We also strongly condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine and reiterate our call on it to refrain from such action and to abide by its international obligations.

The European Union demands that Russia immediately ceases its military actions, unconditionally withdraws all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respects Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders and territorial waters. We call on Russia to respect international humanitarian law and stop their disinformation campaign and cyber-attacks.

The EU is shocked and saddened, and deplores the tragic loss of life and human suffering caused by this war launched by Russia against Ukraine. As ODIHR notes, documented fatal incidents include a ballistic missile strike and a bomb that struck a residential block. We recall the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor's expression of increasing concern, reminding all sides that his office may exercise jurisdiction. The Law of war prohibits indiscriminate attacks and those that target civilians and civilian property.

The European Union stands in solidarity with all those whose lives have been affected by this unjustified and unjustifiable attack and, especially, with those particularly vulnerable groups, like women, children and the elderly. Their rights must be upheld at all times, and accountability for any violation or abuse of these rights guaranteed.

Humanitarian needs are multiplying and spreading by the hour. Numerous civilians are dying or have been injured. According to the United Nations, at least 150,000 Ukrainians have already fled their homes – with many crossing into neighbouring countries. The EU coordinates delivery of emergency assistance to Ukraine through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre is in constant contact with the Ukrainian authorities and those of neighbouring countries to channel further assistance. We call on Russia to ensure rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and assistance to all persons in need. It is imperative that the safety and security of diplomatic and consular missions and their personnel in Ukraine is ensured.

We strongly condemn and express our deep concern over reported casualties of other nationalities, including members of the Greek community in eastern Ukraine, due to Russia's aggressive acts. Two Danish reporters were also wounded. We underline that journalists and other media actors must be offered every protection to carry out their essential role at this extremely dangerous moment. Journalists are civilians and should be treated as non-combatants.

We also call on Russia to ensure the safety and security of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and to facilitate the unhindered evacuation of its staff. We urge all OSCE autonomous institutions and executive structures to address as a matter of priority the humanitarian and other consequences of Russia's ongoing military aggression in the context of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security.

The European Union reiterates its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We call on all countries not to recognise the two self-proclaimed separatist entities and not to facilitate or in any way assist them. The EU has reacted swiftly and forcefully to Russia's recognition of Ukraine's self-proclaimed separatist entities and deployment of its armed forces by adopting

restrictive measures in response. On 25 February, the European Union adopted further restrictive measures that impose massive and severe consequences on Russia for its action, in close coordination with our partners and allies. The EU decided to sanction the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov. The EU also agreed on a further package of individual and economic measures covering also Belarus to respond to the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression carried out by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

The EU is united in its solidarity with Ukraine and will continue to support Ukraine and its people together with its international partners. We stand by the people of Ukraine and its democratically elected institutions and representatives. Following the December 2016 decision by the EU Heads of State or Government, the European Council acknowledges the European aspirations and the European choice of Ukraine, as stated in the Association Agreement. We will do all in our power to not leave Ukraine alone at this time of great need.

The European Union firmly believes that the use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the 21st century. Tensions and conflict should be resolved exclusively through dialogue and diplomacy, which is what the OSCE stands for. The EU will continue cooperating closely with neighbours and reiterates its unwavering support for, and commitment to, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and of the Republic of Moldova. Russia abused its veto power in the UN Security Council on Friday – as it has repeatedly done with the consensus rule in the OSCE - to further its illegal actions. But Russia cannot veto our voices. Russia cannot veto the Ukrainian people. Russia cannot veto its own people protesting this war in the streets. Russia cannot veto the UN Charter and its international obligations and OSCE commitments. Russia cannot, and will not, veto accountability.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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