



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1360
Vienna, 3 March 2022**

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

1. Mr. Chair, we applaud your decision to focus today's Permanent Council's agenda on Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and brutal invasion of Ukraine. This is no time for business as usual. The war of aggression unleashed by Russia and directly supported by Belarus marks a turning point in the history of our continent.
2. There should be no illusions now. This is a full-scale war launched by an aggressor, Russia, with the direct participation of the Lukashenka regime in Belarus as co-aggressor - against an independent and sovereign neighbouring State, Ukraine. The EU resolutely supports Ukraine's inherent right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. No outright lies here or in other international fora, no disinformation and propaganda campaigns can hide the ugly truth: Russia has decided to launch the biggest war of aggression in Europe since World War II. In clear and gross violation of international law, the principles of the UN Charter and the OSCE acquis.
3. The deliberate shelling of civilian targets is shameful, reprehensible and totally unacceptable. It is against international law and international humanitarian law, including the law of war. In the past days, Russia has bombed the Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv, Kherson, Mariupol, Chernihiv, and the capital Kyiv. The dire repercussions for European and global security and stability are Russia's doing. Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it is causing. We welcome the International Criminal Court prosecutor's decision to launch an investigation into possible war crimes or crimes against humanity in Ukraine. Those responsible must and will be held accountable for their actions.

4. Make no mistake: this is President Putin's war, regrettably actively supported by the Lukashenka regime in Belarus. The Kremlin's propaganda and the creation of a fake alternative reality led Russia to war. Anti-war protests are being held in many cities across Russia. In total, more than 6,500 people have been detained at various anti-war protests since 24 February. Russian courts issue 5 to 30 days custody or large fines for the protesters. More than 1 million signatures have been collected so far for a petition to stop Putin's war. In a society, where the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of the media are repressed and any opposition is demonised as foreign, extremist and even terrorist, there is fear. But there is also courage to stand up against war. Despite Roskomnadzor's Orwellian demands to censor any reference to the war waged against Ukraine, truth must and will prevail.

5. We condemn the active involvement of the Lukashenka regime in the ongoing aggression against Ukraine and it will not go without a proper answer. The EU has repeatedly called on Belarus not to enable the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations. In vain. Not coincidentally, on 27 February, a mockery of a constitutional referendum was organised by the regime, against the backdrop of widespread human rights violations and brutal repression throughout Belarusian society and amid anti-war protests. The deletion of the reference to Belarus's non-nuclear status in Article 18 of the Constitution is yet another piece in the disturbing puzzle of the regime's escalatory and illegal actions.

6. We demand that Russia immediately ceases its hostilities, 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. Russia must respect international humanitarian law and the law of war and stop its attacks on densely populated areas and critical infrastructure. In this regard, we welcome the United Nations General Assembly resolution, adopted yesterday with an overwhelming majority, condemning the Russian aggression against Ukraine. We call on Russia to abandon its disinformation campaign and cyber-attacks. We categorically reject the Russian rhetoric hinting at a possible resort to the use of weapons of mass destruction.

7. Deploring the tragic loss of life and human suffering in Ukraine, the European Union stands in solidarity with all those whose lives have been affected by Putin's war 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. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights confirmed on Monday that at least 102 civilians, including 7 children, have been killed, and 304 others injured in Ukraine since the beginning of the Russian hostilities, cautioning that the tally was likely a vast undercount. According to UNHCR, one million people have already fled the war in Ukraine seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Since our last meeting took place, over 800,000 have crossed the shared border into Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania. The EU is working at all levels with EU Member States, Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova to ensure that the safe arrival of third country nationals is facilitated.

8. 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 Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 2014, as well as the two self-proclaimed separatist entities in Ukraine nor to facilitate or in any way assist them. The EU has reacted swiftly and forcefully to Russia's illegal, unjustified and reprehensible actions by adopting restrictive measures. In recent days, we have adopted, in close coordination with our partners and allies, further severe measures against key Russian institutions and banks, and the masterminds of this war, including President Putin. These include a ban on the overflight of EU airspace and on access to EU airports by Russian carriers of all kinds, and a ban on transactions with the Russian Central Bank. We will also step up our coordination against disinformation and other forms of hybrid warfare. The EU also agreed on a further package of individual and economic measures covering also Belarus to respond to the Russian unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, which Belarus enables. The EU further decided to provide Ukraine with urgent humanitarian assistance, as well as with equipment and supplies to the Ukrainian Armed Forces through the European Peace Facility.

9. In line with the OSCE's core principles, it is our strong belief that conflict must be resolved through dialogue and negotiations. Let there be no doubt. The democratic world will hold to account all those responsible for this war and all those who violate the law of war and international humanitarian law. The use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the 21st century. The EU will continue to cooperate closely with neighbours, allies and partners and reiterates its unwavering support for, and commitment to, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and of the Republic of Moldova.
10. Mr. Chair, the Ukrainian people have made the brave and free choice of liberty, democracy, and the rule of law. And today, they are resisting fiercely and heroically. They are defending their land and their dignity. Their freedom and their people. Their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. Their democracy. It is also the dignity, freedom, and democracy of the whole of Europe that is under attack and that they are defending. This is why the European Union sees it as its moral and political duty to rise to this historic challenge. To defend the rules-based international order. Defend international law and OSCE principles and commitments. The European Union will continue to stand united in its solidarity with Ukraine. We will continue to stand by the people of Ukraine and its democratically elected institutions and representatives. On the right side of history.
11. In conclusion, we would like to thank wholeheartedly the brave monitors of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine that have been working under exceptionally harsh conditions in the last days, in particular the teams in the east and in Kyiv, which had to be evacuated under threatening circumstances. We mourn the death of a local employee of the SMM Team in Kharkiv. We call on Russia to ensure the safety and security of the SMM and to facilitate the unhindered evacuation of its remaining staff. We particularly thank the Secretary General and her team for their tireless efforts and for the coordination of the SMM personnel evacuation. Finally, we stand ready to support all efforts of the Chairmanship and the OSCE autonomous institutions and executive structures to undertake concrete actions as a matter of priority with regard to Russia's war against Ukraine in the context of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security.

Thank you. I kindly ask that this Statement be attached to the Journal of the Day.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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