



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No.1473 Vienna, 16 May 2024

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

1. Since our last meeting, Russia has launched an offensive against Ukraine's Kharkiv region, constantly shelling numerous settlements and further exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation in the region. Meanwhile, virtually no Ukrainian region is spared from Russia's targeted attacks on residential neighbourhoods and civilian facilities, including energy infrastructure. As a result, the toll on the civilian population continues to grow –there were over 700 casualties in April alone, which represents a significant increase in these numbers for a second month in a row, according to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Moreover, thousands are currently suffering from power outages due to Russia's attacks.
2. Madame Chair, Ukrainians and their friends mark the World Vyshyvanka Day today, a powerful reminder of the distinctive cultural heritage of the Ukrainian people. Unfortunately, core material and spiritual tenets of Ukrainian heritage are among the main targets of Russia in its imperialistic and revisionist attempts to erase Ukraine's cultural and national identity and deny it the right to independent statehood.
3. The latest OHCHR Report on the Human rights situation during the Russian temporary and illegal occupation of territories of Ukraine and its aftermath, covering the period 24th February 2022 – 31st December 2023, as well as previous Moscow Mechanism and ODIHR reports, document deliberate efforts by Russia to suppress expressions of Ukrainian cultural identity. This

includes the removal of objects of Ukrainian cultural heritage from public spheres of life as well as the seizure of Ukrainian literature and artefacts in the Ukrainian territories Russia temporarily and illegally occupies.

4. The above-mentioned reports also address the forceful imposition of the Russian curriculum and Russian language in Ukrainian schools, the prohibition of the use of the Ukrainian language for official purposes, the imposition of Russian nationality, as well as the arbitrary detention of individuals, holding “pro-Ukrainian” views.
5. Crimean Tatars continue to be negatively affected due to Russia's policies, with systematic restrictions imposed on their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including limitations on freedom of expression, religion or belief, association, and the right to peaceful assembly. As we approach the 80th anniversary of their deportation, we should also not forget that such illegal deportations are being replicated today in the parts of the territory of Ukraine under Russia's temporary and illegal occupation, including in the Crimean peninsula.
6. We strongly urge Russia to stop violating the rights of persons in the Ukrainian territories it temporarily and illegally occupies to preserve their nationality, to choose and express their identity, to engage in the cultural practices of their choice and express themselves in their own language. Russia must respect its international obligations, including under the 1954 Hague Convention and its first Protocol to protect cultural property during armed conflict as well as under the UNESCO's 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.
7. Last week, Russia announced the planning of non-strategic nuclear weapons exercises together with Belarus, the latest example in a long line of irresponsible nuclear rhetoric that underscores its consistent undermining of international peace and security, which we strongly condemn. We resolutely call on Russia to abide, in word and deed, by the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear

War and Avoiding Arms Races from January 2022, which affirmed that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". Both Russia and Belarus must uphold their international obligations and commitments.

8. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We are determined to continue providing Ukraine and its people with all the necessary political, financial, economic, humanitarian, legal, military and diplomatic support for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed, also taking into account the urgent need to speed up and intensify the delivery of all necessary military assistance to Ukraine in its rightful self-defence against the Russian aggressor.
9. We will continue intensive global outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and other partners 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, based on the UN Charter. This Formula is the only viable peace proposal on the table, and we rely on all countries committed to peace to join us in putting it into action, including by participating in the upcoming international high-level peace conference in Switzerland.
10. Fighting Russia's impunity is key to establishing the just and lasting peace that Ukraine deserves. Russia and its leadership must be held fully accountable for waging a war of aggression against Ukraine and for other most serious crimes under international law, as well as for the massive damage caused by its war. The EU is firmly committed to ensuring full accountability for all crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including victims' rights to justice and reparation, as well as guarantees of non-repetition.
11. In conclusion, we once again demand that Russia immediately stop its illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally

recognised borders. We also condemn the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine provided by Belarus, as well as Iran and the DPRK. We urge all countries not to provide material or other support for Russia's war of aggression, which is a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and the OSCE's core principles and commitments.

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

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