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Dear Chairs,

The European Commission would like to thank the representatives of the European Affairs Committees of the Parliaments of the Visegrad Group Countries for the conclusions of its meeting regarding the current situation in Ukraine and energy security.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has grossly violated key norms and principles of international law as expressed in the Charter of the United Nations, notably the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. We continue to demand that Russia ceases its military aggression and fully respects Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders.

As your Committees rightly point out, in response to Russia's military aggression, the European Union and its Member States have, in record speed, adopted the largest sanctions packages in its history. These packages include individual restrictive measures against Russian entities and individuals involved in the violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and key sectors of the Russian economy, which sustain the illegal Russian war efforts.

The European Union abhors the grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed in the context of Russia's aggression. In this regard, the European Union is providing support to, inter alia, the International Criminal Court, UN Commission of Inquiry and Ukraine's prosecution authorities.

Since the start of Russia's aggression, the European Union has significantly stepped up its support, mobilising around EUR 7.2 billion financial and emergency assistance, budget support, crisis response and humanitarian aid. Military assistance measures have also been provided under the European Peace Facility, amounting to EUR 2.5 billion, that will be used to reimburse Member States for their in-kind military support to Ukraine. All Member States are committed to continue providing military assistance to Ukraine as long as necessary.

On 23 June 2022, the European Council decided to grant the status of candidate country to Ukraine – this was a historic moment bringing Ukraine and its citizens closer to the European Union. The European Union also supports Ukraine's reconstruction efforts to help rebuild a democratic and prosperous country. During the Ukraine Recovery Conference on 4 July 2022, President von der Leyen announced the setting up of a reconstruction platform for Ukraine.

In addition to this, the Commission has paid more than EUR 3.5 billion in advance payments to Member States to help them manage the arrival of people fleeing the war in Ukraine on their territory. Under the Home Affairs Funds, the new funding instruments combine to make available a budget of EUR 18 billion to support migration, internal security and border management for 2021-2027.

On 24 February 2022, the Council also triggered the Temporary Protection Directive to offer quick and effective assistance to people fleeing the war in Ukraine¹. Beneficiaries of temporary protection enjoy harmonised rights across the European Union, including in obtaining residence permits, employment opportunities, as well as access to accommodation, social assistance and medical care.

In terms of disinformation, Russia engages in a systematic, international campaign of information manipulation and interference in order to destabilise the whole architecture of global security and deepen the food security crisis it has caused. The fight against Russia's information manipulation has been one of the European Union's key areas of focus, combining strategic communications, debunking, proactive approach, support for independent journalism and policy measures – including sanctions against disinformation outlets and purveyors of disinformation.

As to energy security, the 'Fit for 55' package reflects three ways of cutting European Union's dependence on Russia: diversification of supplies, energy efficiency and the acceleration of renewables². The European Union leaders agreed to phase out our dependence on Russian gas, oil and coal during the informal European Council on 10-11 March. Subsequently, on 18 May 2022, the Commission presented the REPowerEU plan and an EU External Energy Strategy to rapidly reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and fast forward the green transition, while supporting Ukraine to build back better³. On 20 July, the Commission proposed the 'Save Gas for a Safe Winter' and on 5 August the Council adopted a regulation on a voluntary reduction of natural gas demand in the EU by 15% for this winter in order to prepare for possible disruptions of gas supplies from Russia⁴.

In addition, the fifth and sixth sanctions packages introduced, inter alia, a ban on the import of Russian oil and a prohibition to purchase, import or transfer coal and other solid fossil fuels into the European Union if they originate in Russia or are exported from Russia, as from August 2022. The European Union is also providing full support to keep the energy system operational in Ukraine, including via finalising the synchronisation of the Ukrainian (and Moldovan) electricity grids to the Continental European System on 16 March 2022.

The Commission appreciates the ongoing support of the representatives of the European Affairs Committees of the Visegrad Group Countries for a unified European response to

¹ For the full list of categories of persons covered under temporary protection, please consult the [Council Implementing Decision 2022/382](#).

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/fit-for-55-the-eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3131; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022JC0023&from=EN>

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022R1369&from=EN>

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, including phasing out the European Union's dependence on Russian energy imports.

Yours faithfully,

Josep Borrell Fontelles
High Representative/Vice-President

Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President

