Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

Consistent or Conditional? EU Discourse and the Credibility of Normative Power Europe

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Citation
Heesen, V. , J. (2025). *Consistent or Conditional?: EU Discourse and the Credibility of Normative Power Europe*.

Version:	Not Applicable (or Unknown)
License:	License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4280502

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Leiden University

Political Science: International Politics (BSc)

IBO Project: External Relations of the European Union

Course convener: Dr. Karolina Pomorska

Bachelor Thesis

Consistent or Conditional?

EU Discourse and the Credibility of Normative Power Europe

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May 23th 2025

Reference Style: APA 7th

Embargo Statement: Public

Word count: 8673

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Introduction

The liberal international order is undergoing a period of profound contestation. The post-Second World War vision of a multilateral, rules-based international system is increasingly challenged by authoritarian resurgence, geopolitical tension and growing erosion of international liberal norms (Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019). The idealistic vision that once underpinned international cooperation has been shaken by power competition and the instrumental use of law and diplomacy. In this context, foreign policy actors are under greater scrutiny regarding the values they claim to uphold, and the strategic calculations that may under lie them.

The European Union (EU) has long portrayed itself as a global actor grounded in liberal values as human rights, democracy and international law, and committed to the promotion of them. This self-image is captured by Manners (2002) influential concept of 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE), wherein he argues that the EU exercises global influence primarily though the diffusion of norms, rather than hard material power. However, this narrative is increasingly contested. Critics argue that the EU's normative discourse often masks interest-driven motives, is selectively applied, or is undermined by internal inconsistencies (Hyde-Price, 2006, 2008; Diez, 2005; Youngs, 2004; Sjursen, 2006; Keukeleire & Delreux, 2022). These critiques challenge the credibility of the EU's normative identity and question whether it truly acts differently from traditional powers.

The EU itself has responded to this shifting geopolitical reality. Its 2016 Global Strategy, which calls for a "*stronger Europe*", introduced the concept of "*principled pragmatism*", reflecting a growing awareness of the need to reconcile values with real world constraints (European Union, 2016). This opens the door to a more flexible, interest-aware foreign policy, blurring the line between normative and strategic action. This shift raises questions about whether the EU still acts as a normative power in practice, particularly with norms violations varying of strategic significance.

This thesis addresses these questions by analysing the EU's response to two recent cases of international norm violations: Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Azerbaijan's 2023 offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh. Both these events constitute serious violations of core principles embedded in the EU's legal obligations, including territorial integrity, human rights, and the protection of civilians (TEU, Article 21; UN Charter). Yet, only Ukraine represents a case of high strategic interests for the EU. By comparing discursive framing of EU statements across these cases, this thesis investigates whether normative

principles are applied consistently, or whether strategic interest shape how norm violations are responded to by the EU in public discourse. To examine this, the following main question is posed: *"How – and how consistently – does the European Union frame its initial response to comparable norm violations in Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh, and what do these patterns imply for the EU's credibility as a Normative Power?"* This overarching question is addressed in two stages, first: *"What is the dominant framing (primarily normative, strategic, or mixed) in each of the first ten EU statements issued on (a) Ukraine and (b) Nagorno-Karabakh?"* and second: *"To what extent does the distribution of framings differ between the two cases, and does any observed imbalance dictate selective or inconsistent application of the EU's normative commitments?"*

To answer these questions, this thesis study conducts a qualitative content analysis of official EU statements, following a Most Similar System Design (MSSD). With this research, this thesis has academic relevance in the ongoing debate over the EU's global role, particularly the tension between the concept of Normative Power Europe and realist critique of EU's foreign policy behaviour (Hyde-Price, 2006, 2008). Politically, this thesis engages with the EU's credibility, and coherence as a foreign policy actor, which are essential qualities for maintaining its legitimacy and global influence. Societally, answering the question of how the EU responds to norm violations speaks to the EU's ability to uphold the values it claims to represent in a world increasingly hostile to liberal norms. '

The structure of this thesis is as follows: First, an overview over the relevant literature on Normative Power Europe and its critiques will be presented. Second, the conceptual framework will be outlined, defining the key concepts of this thesis. Third, the methodology will be described, including the research design, case selection, and operationalisation. Fourth, the empirical findings of the content analysis will be presented. This will be followed by a critical discussion that interprets the results in light of broader theoretical debates. Finally, this thesis concludes by reflecting on the findings and providing answers to the research questions.

Literature Review

The following section presents a literature review outlining the current state of academic research related to the subject of this thesis.

Normative Power Europe

The origin of the idea of "Normative Power Europe" lies in the "Europe-as-a-power" debate, wherein scholars try to grasp the 'actorness' of the EU and define its external identity. One of the earliest contributions to this debate came from François Duchêne (1972), who introduced the concept of 'Civilian Power Europe' (CPE). This idea emerged in the early 1970s when the European Economic Community (EEC) was expanding as an economic bloc but lacked a unified military force or other common military capabilities. Instead of exerting influence through military means, the EU relied on economic and diplomatic tools to promote peace, stability, and multilateral cooperation. This marked a shift from traditional military-based power politics. Because of the EU's non-military approach and stabilizing role in international relations, Duchêne introduced the concept of 'Civilian Power Europe' (CPE).

Duchêne's framework was later expanded upon by Ian Manners (2002), who introduced the concept of 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE). Manners shifted the focus from *how* the EU wields power to *what* kind of power it exercises. He argued that the EU has the power to define what is considered 'normal' in international relations by shaping global norms, standards, and expectations.

This argument rests on two key points. First, the EU's constitutional foundations give it a distinct normative identity. Second, this identity predisposes the EU to act normatively in world politics (Manners, 2002, p. 252). Manners argues that the EU's identity is a result of the EU's creation in the post-Second World War historical context, which fostered a commitment to "pooling their resources to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty" (Manners, 2002, p. 240). As a result, the EU evolved into a hybrid system of supranational and intergovernmental governance, structured around treaty-based legal order and elite-driven decision-making (Manners, 2002, p. 241). The EU's identity is fundamentally shaped by its core values and principles. The most significant of these values are: *peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development,* and *good governance* (Treaty on European Union [TEU], 2012, Articles 2 and 21[1]).

According to Manners, these identity characteristics set the EU apart from traditional states, as they transcend the anarchic, self-interest-driven nature of realist and neorealist paradigms. Consequently, the EU's foreign policy is guided by ethical considerations rather than purely strategic interests, making it, in its own words, a 'force for good' (European Union, 2003).

This optimistic vision has been widely influential but is also increasingly critiqued. While many scholars accept that the EU aspires to a distinct role in the international system,

a great body of literature critiques NPE from various angles. While all points of critique contain arguments about selectivity, inconsistency, and instrumentalization of norms, they differ in their explanations for these shortcomings.

Realist critiques

Realist theory fundamentally challenges the assumptions underlying Normative Power Europe (NPE). Prominent realist scholars as Mearsheimer tend to have a pessimistic view of international politics, arguing that regardless of state-actors' intend, conflict and competition are inevitable due to the structural pressures of the international system – hence the title of Mearsheimer's book, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (Mearsheimer, 2001). Morgenthau (1983) even warned against 'moralism in foreign policy'. Ultimately, realists see norms and values as secondary importance to strategic interest. Therefore, realist scholars argue that the EU's foreign policy is ultimately shaped by strategic interests, regardless of its normative rhetoric. Power, in the broadest sense, drives the behaviour of state-actors. Hyde-Price (2006, 2008) offers one of the most direct critiques to the notion of NPE, arguing that the EU, like any other international actor, operates within an anarchic international system where power and security dominate decision-making. From this perspective, norms are instrumentalized to justify interest-driven policies rather than guiding in their own right. He therefore commented that *"NPE is naïve at best and hypocritical at worst, disguising geopolitical influence as moral authority*" (Hyde-Price, 2008, p. 32). This realist perspective stands in sharp contrast to the more idealist or constructivist interpretations of NPE, which view the EU as a unique type of international actor capable of shaping global norms through example, persuasion, and legal commitment (Manners, 2002).

Youngs (2004) similarly argues that the EU's commitment to human rights and democracy promotion is often applied selectively and primarily subordinated to geopolitical interests such as energy security, migration control or regional stability. The 2016 EU Global Strategy illustrates this trend, by advocating for "principled pragmatism". Tocci (2017), as one of the architects of the EUGS, argues that the EU must balance its values with a more pragmatic approach to navigating a more hostile and unstable international environment. This concept acknowledges normative goals, but at the same time implies the legitimization of cooperation with illiberal regimes and a more flexible application of values. From a realist perspective, this is not a middle ground but rather confirmation that power considerations override normative intent (Hyde-Price, 2008).

Constructivist-Discursive and Identity-based Critiques

Other scholars take a more constructivist approach, analysing NPE as a part of discourse that constructs the EU's identity in opposition to norm-violating "others". Diez (2005) argued that NPE is not just an analytical tool but also a political instrument that reinforces the EU's self-proclaimed image as a moral actor. This mechanism of identity construction often involves "*othering*" where non-European states can be cast as uncivilized or illegitimate, reinforcing the EU's superiority and managing relationships with third countries (Tocci, 2008). Such framing can obscure strategic motives behind the EU's actions by enabling the EU to use norm-based rhetoric to justify strategic political goals.

Manners (2018) later revised his original concept of NPE, acknowledging the rise of global contestation and post-truth politics. He acknowledged that the EU's normative claims are increasingly challenged, and that the credibility of NPE has eroded by collectivism and instrumentalism. His reflections align with the broader critical turn in the literature that questions whether the EU can continue to present itself as a normative power without addressing these internal contradictions.

Inconsistency and instrumentalism

Whether from a realist, constructivist, or critical standpoint, inconsistencies and instrumentalism are central to most critiques of NPE. Sjursen (2006) argues that not just stated commitments, but consistent application is of great importance to the EU's normative legitimacy. Inconsistency undermines credibility and suggests that normative principles are applied when it is convenient, rather than as a matter of principle. Tocci (2008) argues that normative language often serves strategic functions, such as maintaining stability or managing relationships with third countries. Youngs (2021) found that even in response to serious norm violations, the EU often balances rhetorical condemnation with strategic restraints. He argues that the response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine exemplifies a broader trend: normative discourse is maintained, but concrete policy adjusted to fit geopolitical realities, which he called 'liberal redux geopolitics'.

Institutional and practical critiques

A final body of literature focuses less on theories and more on institutional constraints that hinders normative ambition. Balfour (2016) argues that the EU's foreign policy is characterized by internal contradictions and compromises that reflect competing institutional

interests rather than coherent normative intent. Keukeleire and Delreux (2022) offer a broader institutional explanation, noting that EU foreign policy is shaped by complex interactions between member states, the Commission, and the European External Action Service (EEAS). These actors often have diverging priorities, which can result in fragmented and incoherent policy outcomes. Such fragmentation, as a result of complex multi-level governance, can obscure whether a policy is truly norm-driven or simply the result of institutional bargaining. Smith (2013) built on these arguments, by exploring how different EU instruments and policy areas are managed by separate institutions with often conflicting agendas. She argued that normative goals are frequently compromised when interest-driven tools dominate implementation. This reinforces the idea that the EU's foreign policy lacks a unified strategic direction. Juncos and Pomorska (2011) emphasise the role of bureaucratic politics and institutional competition in producing these inconsistencies, particularly within the EEAS and between supranational and intergovernmental components of the EU. This body of literature does not per se challenge the idea of NPE, but argue the practical limitations due to structural dysfunctions.

Implications for this Thesis

The literature on EU foreign policy reveals a significant tension between normative commitments and strategic interests. While the EU continuous to promote itself as a value-driven actor, a number of theoretical and empirical critiques have highlighted the inconsistent, selective, and interest-driven nature of its external actions. While the concept of NPE remains influential, it is increasingly contested, in particular in light of recent geopolitical challenges and the adaption of principled pragmatism as a guiding strategy (European Union, 2016).

This body of literature provides the theoretical foundation for this thesis, which seeks to empirically examine how – and how consistent - the EU frames its response to norm violations – in particular in the cases of Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh. To apply these concepts in a systematic way, it is necessary to distinguish between normative and strategic framing, and what is considered as consistent. The next section develops a conceptual framework to clarify how we define a normatively framed response, and a strategically framed response.

Conceptual framework

To ensure analytical clarity and valid comparison across cases, this section conceptualises the central element of this research. Proper conceptualization allows us to define observable indicators that can guide empirical analysis and reduce ambiguity in interpreting EU behaviour.

EU Response Framing

This thesis examines the framing in the EU's response to the norm violations in two conflicts: The full scale 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine and the 2023 Azerbaijani offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh. Therefore, framing in the EU's response is treated as the main phenomenon of interest. The conceptual options for how framing can manifest are: 1) primarily normative, and 2) primarily strategic. The classification is based on a coded pre-set of indicators derived from the literature, which is elaborated on more extensively in the operationalisation part later in this thesis.

Normative framing refers to a foreign policy response that is primarily justified in terms of legal principles, moral values, or international norms, such as democracy, rule of law, human rights, and territorial integrity. This definition reflects the EU's self-declared legal normative foreign policy obligations codified in Article 21(1)-(2) of the Treaty of the European Union (2012), which outlines the EU's obligation to guide its external action by the principles that have inspired its own creation and development. This concept aligns with Manners (2002) theory of "Normative Power Europe", where the EU acts out of moral obligation rather than material or strategic interest. This makes it theoretically grounded and policy-relevant. Identifying normative framing allows us to examine whether the EU presents its foreign policy as being driven by norms and legal obligations, rather than strategic interest. In doing so, it helps evaluate whether the EU lives up to its normative identity, and how consistently it applies those principles across different geopolitical contexts.

A strategic framing is a foreign policy response predominantly justified on strategic, geopolitical, or economic interest, rather than values or legal norms. This includes language emphasising energy security, maintaining regional stability, or managing migration.
Such framing reflects realist perspective on EU foreign policy (Hyde-Price, 2006, 2008; Youngs, 2004), emphasizing power and self-interest. This conceptual framework provides a counterpoint to the EU's normative self-image. Identifying interest-based framing is essential for assessing whether the EU's external discourse aligns with its claimed normative identity,

or whether it reflects more realist patterns of international behaviour, grounded in power, security, and material interests. This allows for exploring whether the EU acts as a normative power, as it claims, or whether its language and actions are better explained by realist critiques (Hyde-Price, 2006, 2008). By contrasting strategic with normative framing, this study contributes to the broader debate on the consistency and credibility of the EU's normative identity.

Consistency is treated as a key indicator of the EU's normative credibility (Sjursen, 2006). It is defined as *the degree to which the EU applies similar normative principles, references and instruments across comparable cases of norm violations*. In this thesis, consistency is evaluated through, and across the discursive framing of EU responses to two similar cases of norm violations: the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine and the 2023 Azerbaijani offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh. Using this definition, consistency functions as a benchmark to examine the EU's normative credibility and legitimacy. Consistency in normative response across cases supports the EU's image as a value-based actor. In contrast, variation in framing when contextual factors are being held constant suggests that norms are applied selectively. This would raise questions about instrumentalism, strategic calculations, or internal constraints. This concept is therefore central in evaluating whether the EU's role as a normative power is reflected in practice.

Theoretical Expectations

Building on the conceptual definitions above and the literature discussed, the following propositions outline the expected patterns observable in the EU's responses to the norm violations of the cases. One would expect that in the response to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the EU will frequently employ strategic framing, emphasising considerations such as energy security and regional stability. This proposition follows from of realist arguments that when core strategic interest are at stake, these interest override normative considerations (Hyde-Price, 2006, 2008).What follows out of the same argument, is the expectation that in its response to the 2023 Azerbaijani offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh, the EU will rely more heavily on normative framing, referencing international law and multilateral institutions. Since there are fewer direct strategic interests are involved, the EU has more space to align discourse with its normative principles. As a result of this logic, it is expected that when strategic interests override normative commitments, the EU will apply its normative principles inconsistency across comparable cases of norm violations. This reflects key critique of selectivity and inconsistency in the EU's adoption of its normative commitments (Sjursen,

2006; Diez, 2005; Youngs, 2004, 2021). After conducting the research, there will be revisitation of these propositions in the critical discussion to assess whether the observed patterns align with the theoretical expectations.

Having established the theoretical expectations, the following section outlines the methodological approach used to empirically examine these expectations.

Methodology and Research Design

This thesis applies a qualitative content analysis of official EU statements issued in response to two cases of norm violations: Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and Azerbaijan's 2023 offensive of Nagorno-Karabakh. The research design follows a Most-Similar System Design (MSSD) logic. This allows for a controlled comparison of two structurally similar cases of norm violations – Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh – in order to assesses variation in discourse framing, and examine the consistency of EU's framing in response to these - and across - these cases (Landman, 2008).

The analysis contains two layers, corresponding to the two stages of the research question. The first layer classifies each individual statement by dominant framing, addressing the question: "*What is the dominant framing in each case*?". The second layer aggregates these results to evaluate cross-case consistency, addressing the question: "*To what extent does the EU apply its normative commitments consistently across the two cases?"*While not a full discourse analysis, the approach treats official EU statements as meaningful policy texts that reflect the EU's public justification and identity claims in foreign policy.

Case selection and Comparative Logic

Norm violations serve as the trigger for EU response and form the basis for case selection. Both the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022) and the Azerbaijani offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh (2023) constitute serious breaches of international norms, including territorial integrity (UN Charter), humanitarian law, and civilian protection. These violations are also explicitly addressed under the EU's normative obligations in Article 21 (TEU), justifying the relevance of both cases for assessing the EU's normative claims.

In addition to norm similarity, both conflicts occur in the EU's eastern neighbourhood; involve non-EU member states under the Eastern Partnership framework; and take place in the post-Soviet regional sphere, which is known for its historically sensitive area for EU external relations (Youngs, 2021). Since neither countries are official member states, both

conflicts are happening outside EU treaty protection, ensuring a level playing field in legal terms. Furthermore, both conflicts occurred in the post-2016 Global Strategy period, in a similar geopolitical environment. These factors ensure institutional and contextual comparability, strengthening the internal validity of the comparative design.

That said, it is also acknowledged that they differ in important aspects. The EU's geopolitical interests in terms of security and economy are deeper in Ukraine; the intensity of norm violations differ; and the volume of media and political attention varies significantly across the two conflicts. These factors may be relevant context for the EU's differences in response framing, and will therefore not be treated as explanatory variables, but rather form part of the broader political context wherein the EU's response framing is interpreted.

It is important to note that this thesis acknowledges that both these conflicts have deeper historical roots and are part of longer standing conflicts. However, this thesis limits its analysis to the most recent major escalations: the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, launched on 24 February, and the 2023 Azerbaijani offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh, launched on 19 September. This choice is based on the need to compare recent, clearly defined norm violations occurring under the current EU Global Strategy framework and within a similar geopolitical timeframe.

Due to the large disparity in the volume of EU statements between the two cases, a fixed number of ten official statements was selected for each conflict. This ensures a controlled volume for comparison, focussing on the initial frame as immediate response, limiting time-dependent distortions – such as reconstruction framing or long-term diplomacy, and the granting of candidate membership status for Ukraine – which may alter the EU's discourse, and make the study transparent and replicable. However, this operationalization also has limitations for the study. The relatively small sample size may result in disproportionately greater influence of unusual statements as outliers, affecting the aggregated proportions. In the case of Ukraine it may limit the full diversity of EU responses. These limitations are acknowledged and noted. The limited timeframe makes this thesis' findings not representative for the total discourse framing as response to these conflicts. This is however not a limitation, but reflects the focus on the initial and immediate EU responses of this thesis (Halperin & Heath, 2020).

By holding the nature of the norm violations and the regional context relatively constant, this MSSD enables a focused comparison of how the EU frames its external response. The goal is not to identify causal mechanisms of internal decision-making motives,

but rather to evaluate whether the EU applies its normative principles consistently across comparable cases.

This in turn, provides empirical insights into how strategic considerations, instrumental use of norms, and inconsistencies in applications shape the EU's external discourse. It allows for a critical reflection on the credibility of the EU's normative identity, and the practical meaning of its 'principled-pragmatism' approach in real-world foreign policy. It ultimately enables us to answer the research question: *"How – and how consistently – does the European Union frame its initial response to comparable norm violations in Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh, and what do these patterns imply for the EU's credibility as a Normative Power""*

Data Collection

Due to the extensive volume of EU communications, this thesis uses a purposive fixed-quota sampling strategy designed to ensure both comparability and manageability of primary sources. The data consists of the first ten official EU statements issued in response to:

1. The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine (Starting 27 February 2022), and
2. The 2023 Azerbaijani offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh (Starting 19 September).

Statements were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Institutional origin: Documents were issued by one of the following EU actors: the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP), the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission, or the European Council
2. Topic focus: They explicitly addressed the specific conflict under study – the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine or the 2023 Azerbaijani offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh
3. Source: Only texts published on the official portals of the EEAS, Consilium, or the European Commission Press Corner were included
4. Type: The sample includes official statements, declarations, and press releases that articulate the EU's external response to these conflicts

The cut-off point for data selection was set at the first ten qualifying statements per case, counted in strict chronological order from the beginning on the day of the respective escalation. By limiting the sample to the first institutional responses – while diversifying across multiple EU bodies – this approach supports a triangulated yet focussed analysis.

The symmetrical sample size also allows for direct comparison in terms of discursive framing. By capping the sample in this manner, it enhances transparency and coding

consistency while preserving asymmetry in communication intensity, which itself becomes an empirical finding and will be reflected on in terms of response consistency.

Operationalization

Based on the literature and or prior conceptualizations, this thesis uses direct and indirect indicators including textual, behaviour, and comparative elements. Together, they allow us to assess framing and consistency more inclusive and avoid relying only on rhetoric. They are derived from existing literature on Normative Power Europe (Manners, 2002) and its critical, realist, instrumentalist and selectivity critiques (Hyde-Price, 2006, 2008; Youngs, 2004; Diez, 2005; Sjursen, 2006).

This study consists of two separate layers of analysis to examine consistency of the EU in its statement framing. The first layer of analysis involves the classification of each individual EU statement as being framed in *primarily normative, primarily strategic, or mixed* terms, through coding via the pre-set, direct in-text indicators, as illustrated in table 1 and table 2, which allows to answer the first stage of the research question: *"What is the dominant framing (primarily normative, strategic, or mixed) in each of the first ten EU statements issued on (a) Ukraine and (b) Nagorno-Karabakh?"* The second layer assesses the consistency of EU's discourse response across the two cases, by comparing the relative proportions of framing classifications, enabling the answering of the second layer of the research question: *"To what extent does the distribution of framings differ between the two cases, and does any observed imbalance dictate selective or inconsistent application of the EU's normative commitments?"*

The full coding overview, including the color-coded textual statements and an overview table for informational clarity, stating the indicators triggered per statement, is provided in Appendix A for the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, and appendix B for the case of Ukraine.

Table_1

Normative Framing indicators for official EU statements

Indicator	Description	Example	Code
Reference to legal or moral principles	law or EU values (TEU, Art. 21; UN charter; Genva conventions)	"Russia's invasion violates the UN charter and international law"	N1
Normative justified legal or institutional action	Use of diplomatic, legal, or economic measures explicitly justified on normative grounds	Adoption of Temporary Protection Directive	N2
Support for multilateral legal/humanitarian institutions	Active support of or cooperation with ICC, UN, ICR, etc.	"The EU supports ICC efforts to prosecute war crimes in Ukraine"	N3
Identity-based normative framing	Framing response as a reflection EU's identity as normative power or solidarity based on shared values"	"As a union of values, the EU stands by and supports…"	N4

Table 2

Strategic Framing indicators for official EU statements

Indicator	Description	Example	Code
Energy security justification	Reference to oil/gas dependency. Diversification, or energy market stability	"This sanction package is designed to secure alternative energy supplies"	S1
Migration or border control justification	Concern for migration management, border security, or refugee containment	"We must act to prevent uncontrolled , destabilizing migratory flows"	S2
Geopolitical stability / regional power justification	Justification in terms of regional balance, avoiding escalation, or preserving EU influence	"This measure supports regional stability and prevents further escalation"	S3
Economic/trade interest justification	Justification based on economic impact, market disruption	"To protect European Businesses.."	S4
Cooperation with norm-violating actors	Cooperation justified by economic, diplomatic or security needs despite clear norm violations	"The new Energy-partnership with Azerbaijan has been signed"	S5

A document will be considered *primarily normative* when it contains at least three normative framing indicators and no more than one strategic framing indicator, or at least one normative framing indicator with total absence of strategic framing indicators. It is considered *primarily strategic* when it contains three or more strategic framing indicators, and no more than two normative framing indicators. It is also classified *primarily strategic* when there is at least one strategic framing indicator and total absence of normative framing indicators. All other combinations are considered *mixed*. This analysis counts the presence of indicators, not its frequencies, therefore, repeated indicators do not raise the score.

Literature on 'Normative-Power-Europe' and its critiques show that normative discourse is often instrumentalized to mask interest-driven motives (Hyde-Price, 2006, 2008; Youngs 2004, Diez, 2005). Requiring a more strict threshold for normative classification avoids overinterpreting rhetorical references to norms and minimises the risk of misclassifying a strategically framed statement that employs normative language superficially.

Following this document-level coding of EU responses, this thesis applies a second layer analysis to assert consistency of EU external action across the two selected conflicts. The core metric for this analysis is framing consistency across cases, which functions as an indirect indicator for normative approach in its external action. To assess this, the total number of coded responses in each case is aggregated, and the relative portion of responses coded as *primarily normative, primarily strategic,* or *mixed* is calculated per case.

When there is a notable imbalance - defined as a deviation of more than 20 percentage point between the share of *primarily normative*, *strategic,* or *mixed* responses in the two cases – it will be interpreted and treated as a potential indicator of selective application of EU normative commitments. This threshold provides a structured and transparent basis for evaluation whether the EU applies its value-based principles consistently, or whether response justifications vary significantly despite comparable norm violations. This analysis does not treat selectivity as a variable but as a pattern emerging from aggregated discursive framings. These observed patterns then serve the empirical basis for the critical discussion. There, they are interpreted in the broader light of academic debates on strategic instrumentalism, double standards, the credibility of the EU's normative identity, and the practical implications of the notion of principled-pragmatism.

Research findings and analysis

The following section presents the results of the empirical analysis based on the indicator-based content analysis of EU statements. First, each case is briefly introduced with relevant contextual information, and is followed by the results of the first layer of analysis, which classifies each statement according to its dominant framing. Finally, the section examines the second layer of analysis, which compares the overall patterns between the two cases to assess consistency in the EU's external response.

Nagorno-Karabakh case

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has a long and complex history involving territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with episodes of armed conflict in the 1990s, 2016 and 2020. While this broader context is acknowledged this thesis focuses specifically on the September 2023 Azerbaijani military offensive, which resulted in the mass-displacement of over 100.000 ethnic Armenians from the region (Amnesty International, 2023). The offensive signalled a significant escalation, raising international concerns regarding human rights and ethnic cleansing (Humans Rights Watch, 2023). The absence of EU consensus and relatively muted institutional response makes this case analytically valuable, since it offers a contrasting setting to Ukraine for assessing normative consistency, especially in relation to the principles of humanitarian law, minority rights, and protection of civilians.

Empirical findings

In the aftermath of Azerbaijani's offensive of 19 September 2023, the EU issued a limited number of official public responses. Within the selection criteria, the fixed-quota of ten statements was reached in a timeframe of 29 after the conflicts' escalation. Most of these statements were issued by the European External Action Service (EEAS). Only a small number of statements were published by the Commission, and none originated from the Council, which did not issue formal conclusions or statements on the matter during this period. The content analysis of the ten statements shows a predominance of normative framing. Specifically, nine statements are classified as *primarily normative*, referring to principles of human rights, international law, multilateral legal- and/or humanitarian institutions, the EU's value-based identity, or use of diplomatic, legal, or economic measures normatively justified: "*The European Union supports the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICR), which is facilitating the urgent evacuation of wounded people as well*

as patients, and the provision of emergency assistance on the ground." (EEAS, 2023, para. 2). The remaining statement is classified as *mixed*, containing both normative and strategic justification elements. None of the statements were codes as *primarily strategic*. All of the statements had at least one reference to international legal and/or moral principles. The different EU statements in response to the norm violations in the Nagorno-Karabh conflict were therefore largely consistent in normative tone.

Ukraine case

The conflict between *Russia and Ukraine* dates back to the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea, and the onset hostilities in Eastern Ukraine. However, for the purpose of this study, the analysis is limited to the full-scale Russian invasion launched on 24 February 2022, because it marks a distinct escalation and a major turning point in EU foreign policy engagement.

The invasion constituted large scale violation of key international norms, particularly those concerning territorial integrity, humanitarian law, the protection of civilians, and the non-use of force (United Nations, 1945, Article 2[4]; Treaty on European Union [TEU], 2012, Article 21; Geneva Conventions, 1949).). The EU responded rapidly, launching sereval sanctions packages, emergency humanitarian support, and diplomatic coordination with international partners (European Commission, 2022). This case is selected not only for its geopolitical relevance, but because it provides a clear example or norm violations relevant for the EU's normative foreign policy commitments under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the EU global strategy (European Union, 2016) and its treaties.

Empirical findings

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022, the European Union reacted with swift and numerous public statements. Within just two days, the EU had already issued more than ten statements meeting the selection criteria. This reflects a rapid and coordinated institutional response. These statements were published across all three selected platforms, including the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission, and notably, the European Council, which conveyed an extraordinary meeting.

The content analysis illustrated a pattern of normative framing. Out of the ten statements, eight are coded as *primarily normative,* citing principles as sovereignty, territorial integrity, international law, and human rights. The two remaining statements are categorized

as *mixed*, combining normative language with elements of strategic reasoning, primarily about regional stability. None of the statements were coded as *primarily strategic*. This indicates that even when there were strategic concerns, they were embedded within broader normative framing: "… *undermining European and global security and stability*" (Michel & von der Leyen, 2022, p. 1). The EU's responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine were therefore largely consistent in normative tone.

Consistency between responses

These two cases were selected using a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) logic: both involve sudden military escalation, similar geopolitical international environment, engagement with the EU's neighbourhood policy, and ultimately, clear violations of international norms. By holding these structural factors relatively constant, the comparison focuses attention on potential variation in the EU's discursive response to norm violations. This forms the basis for the second layer of analysis, which explores the consistency of the EU's discursive framing across the two selected cases of norm violation. To assess this, the total number of coded responses in each case is aggregated, and the relative portion of responses coded as *primarily normative*, *primarily strategic*, or *mixed* is calculated per case.

For the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the results show that 90% percent of the EU's responses were framed in *primarily normative* terms, while 10% were classified as *mixed*. No statements were categorized as *primarily strategic*.

For the Ukraine case, 80% of the responses were coded as *primarily normative*, with 20% classified as *mixed*. Again, none of the statements were categorized as *primarily strategic.*

These results indicate that in both cases, the EU's initial public response leaned heavily on normative justifications, such as references to international law and multilateral institutions. However, the proportion of mixed framing is slightly higher in the Ukraine case. This suggests that even though normative language was dominant in both crisisses, strategic considerations were more embedded in the discourse of responses to Ukraine. However, this was still in combination with normative references.

The absence of any statement falling in the primarily strategic framing is notable. It implies that the EU deliberately avoids presenting its foreign policy responses in terms of interest-based or strategic framing alone. Certainly not in the initial phase of public communications. While this suggests a strong normative approach in EU discourse, it is important to acknowledge that this outcome may reflect the limits of the methodological and

operational design used for this thesis. Specifically, subtle or implicit forms of strategic reasoning may not be captured by the classification system, especially if such motives are embedded in broader normative language. This limitation is further explored in the critical discussion. For as of now, the findings illustrate that normative legitimacy remains the most important frames through which the EU states its external actions. The differences in proportion of *primarily normative* and *mixed* response are not significant, and therefore, the second layer of analysis suggests that the EU is consistent in its normative-strategic framing to both of these different cases of norm violations.

Critical discussion

This section reflects critically on the findings of the two layer empirical analysis by comparing more deeply and interpreting their implications in light of the literature on Normative Power Europe (NPE), its critiques and the broader debate over the EU's global role. It also evaluates the methodological and conceptual limits of this study.

The critical discussion invites reflection on the expectations outlined in the conceptual framework and the methodological design. It was anticipated the EU's response to Ukraine would contain more strategic framing, driven by the country's strategic significance. In contrast, it was expected that Nagorno-Karabakh contained a more purely normative framed response, given its lower strategic importance. Given the assumption that strategic interest would override normative commitments, the final expectation suggested that inconsistency in the EU's normative framing would be observable.

The comparative findings reveal a dominant pattern of normative framing in both cases. In the case of Ukraine, 80% of the EU's responses were classified as *primarily normative*, while 20% were *mixed*. For Nagorno-Karabakh, the distribution was even more normative: 90% of the statements were classified as *primarily normative* and only 10% *mixed*. No statement in either case was classified as *primary strategic*. As discussed in the empirical findings section, this suggests that the EU is consistent in its normative framing across cases with different strategic stakes.

However subtle differences suggest a degree of divergence that asks closer attention. Beyond the robust classification of statements, the presence of specific indicators provides a more nuanced picture. In Ukraine, the indicator N4 – which captures identity-based normative framing or expression of solidarity with 'like-minded' actors – was triggered in five out of the ten statements. This is a significant contrast with the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, where N4 was triggered only once. Drawing on Diez's (2005) concept of "*othering*" in the EU's

normative discourse, the strong presence of N4 in the Ukraine case suggests a construction of Ukraine as part of a shared European identity. This potentially reinforces a binary between a normative '*self'* and a norm-violating '*other'*. While this may increase solidarity, it can also serve a strategic function by enabling a more hostile stance towards Russia. This interpretation is reinforced by the frequency of S3. This indicator – which is linked to references to geopolitical stability and regional influence – appears in nine out of the ten Ukraine-related statements, compared to only one in the Nagorno-Karabakh case. This suggests that even though the EU consistently used normative rhetoric, it views Ukraine through a significantly more strategic lens.

The intensity and speed of the EU's issued statements to these conflicts differ notably. The ten selected Ukraine statements were issued within two days of the invasion, reflecting a high level of institutional urgency. In contrast, the ten Nagorno-Karabakh statements were spread over a 29 day period, suggesting lower political prioritization. This is also reflected by the activity of the European Council. In the Ukraine case, it issued four out of the ten statements, during that initial two days. In contrast, the Nagorno-Karabakh case did not receive official statement from the European council, in the period of 29 days. As the council represents the member states interest, this might reflect a higher degree of intergovernmental consensus and greater geopolitical concern regarding Ukraine. To make this contrast in political focus and institutional response volume difference even more clearly, out of the ten statements regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, four were not even entirely dedicated to the conflict – while explicitly discussing it – but rather embedded in broader foreign policy communications.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while the EU maintained a public normative posture in both cases, Ukraine statements were more mixed in its underlying logic and reflecting indirect strategic justification. The Nagorno-Karabakh case constitutes to more purely normative framed statements, resulting in observed inconsistencies in the EU's normative discourse and policy, and therefore confirming our expectations.

<u>Link to the literature</u>

A central concern raised by the literature on Normative Power Europe is the issue of consistency. As Sjursen (2006) argues, the credibility of normative commitments is not just a matter of normative language, but more importantly, of consistency applying those principles across similar contexts. This study therefore adopted consistency as a benchmark for normative legitimacy. While the initial analysis suggested that the EU was broadly consistent

in its framing across the two cases, deeper examination reveals subtle but important inconsistencies.

One of such inconsistencies emerges in the volume and intensity of response. Although the framing remained predominantly normative in both cases, the EU issued the selected Ukraine statements within two days, while the Nagorno-Karabakh statements were issued in a period of 29 days. This reflects clear disparity in institutional urgency and political prioritization. Furthermore, in the case of Ukraine, the EU responses include robust sanctions against norm-violator Russia, while such sanctions were absent in the Nagorno-Karabakh case against norm-violator Azerbaijan. These differences in practice, despite similar norm violations, reflect underlying strategic considerations, suggesting inconsistency in how normative commitments are operationalised.

The notion of principled pragmatism, introduced in the EU global Strategy (European Union, 2016), becomes relevant here. The notion suggested foreign action that seeks to balance values and interest by maintaining normative ambition while engaging with geopolitical realities. In practice, however, it may function more as a rhetorical instrument that allows the EU to justify selective normative engagement. In Ukraine, where strategic interests are high, this pragmatism manifests itself as a form of normative-strategic hybrid discourse with legal- and moral institutional backing, while also including strategic-material actions. In Nagorno-Karabakh, where strategic interests are more limited, the response remained rhetorically normative and lacked the material backing made in the Ukraine case. Therefore, the principle of consistency appears to be subordinated to pragmatic calculations, which challenges the EU's normative identity. This seems to fit with Youngs (2021) concept of "*liberal redux geopolitics*", which he described as a broad trend, where normative discourse is maintained, but concrete policy adjusted to fit geopolitical realities.

These patterns align with Hyde-Price's (2006, 2008) realist critique, which argues that normative commitments are secondary to strategic motives, and that the EU's normative claims often conceal strategic motives. Similarly, Youngs (2004) suggests that the line between normative and strategic action is blurred in practice, and that norms may be instrumentalised to serve underlying geopolitical goals. The frequent use of identity-based language in the Ukraine case (N4) and the even more frequent references to geopolitical stability (S3) reflect this duality. While the EU's discourse is thus not devoid of normative framing, its selectivity and inconsistency raise questions about its normative coherence.

From a more constructivist perspective, Diez' notion of EU's identity construction mechanisms sheds light on how normative language is used to reinforce politically motivated

narratives. The frequent invocation of shared European identity and solidarity based on 'like-minded' in the case of Ukraine suggest a form of "*othering*" where the EU and its like-minded partners are positioned as the correct moral actor, while distancing it from norm-violating aggressors, in this case Russia. This identity discourse is less used in Nagorno-Karabakh, where the geopolitical stakes are lower. These differences in framing suggests that even the EU's use of identity-based normative discourse may serve strategic ends, reinforcing critiques of NPE's selectivity.

Finally, as Manners (2018) himself noted, that the EU's claim to normative power is increasingly challenged by internal contradictions and external perceptions of hypocrisy. If consistency is key to credibility, as Sjursen (2006) argues, then the observed divergence in scope, volume, institutional commitment and operationalization between the cases highlight the argument against that credibility.

In sum, while the EU maintains a normatively structured discourse, deep analysis and interpretation reveals significant variation in its responses to similar norm violations. This reflects that strategic calculations undermine its normative consistency. These findings constitutes support of a more critical, conditional view of the EU's role as a true normative actor in world politics.

Methodological and Conceptual Limitations

While the study adopts a systematic a transparent approach to analysing EU discourse, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the data selection focussed only on the first ten statements per case. While this was done out of operational necessity, it narrows the scope and may miss longer term-shifts in discourse. Especially for Ukraine, where the response evolved rapidly, limiting the dataset to two days may underrepresent strategic framing that emerged later.

Second, the operationalizing of framing types, based on literature-derived indicators, impose rigid thresholds that may oversimplify complex statements. The classification requirement for example a primarily strategic statement required at least three or more strategic indicators triggered, with two or less normative indicators does ensure consistency, however may fail to capture more normative rhetoric masked strategic elements. As Youngs (2004) argued that the boundary between normative and strategic motives is often blurred in practice, this could especially be the case in the EU's discourse framing.

Thirdly, building on the operationalization limitations, the indicators may also be imperfect and therefore may fall to the same problems. N4 (identity-based solidarity) is context-

sensitive and may signify normative commitments in some contexts, and strategic alignment in others cases. Similarly,S3 (geopolitical stability) may be normatively motivated in some contexts, while it serves as a strategic framing trigger. The meaning of these indicators is thus not strictly fixed, and risk judgement bias through interpretation of the researcher. A critical discourse analyse would be a good option to control of this interpretation bias.

Thirdly, while the methodological design (Most-Similar Systems Design) is appropriate for controlling for context similarities and strengthen the comparison of varying discourse framing, the cases may not be perfectly matched. The differences in for media visibility, threat for European Security, and the intensity of the conflict may be acknowledged and controlled for in the design, they nonetheless limit the external validity of the comparison.

Implications

Despite these acknowledged limitations, the study provides valuable insights to the EU's discursive practice patterns. It suggests that while the EU does maintain a consistent normative stance, the stance is more elaborate and responsive in strategically significant cases. The deeper indirect strategic cues in the case of Ukraine, together with higher institutional intensity and broader policy actions, implies that normative discourse may be used instrumentally to legitimate interest-based decisions. The notion of principled pragmatism may help to explain this flexible approach, implying that strategic-interest shapes how norms are framed and applied. However, this would complicate the notion of NPE, aligning with critiques about inconsistency, selectivity and instrumentalism.

Conclusion

This thesis investigates the question: *"How – and how consistently – does the European Union frame its initial response to comparable norm violations in Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh, and what do these patterns imply for the EU's credibility as a Normative Power"* Through an indicator-based content analysis of EU statements, the study aimed to assess whether normative or strategic considerations dominated the EU's official discourse, and whether this discourse was consistently applied across both cases

The first sub-question asked: *"What is the dominant framing (primarily normative, strategic, or mixed) in each of the first ten EU statements issued on (a) Ukraine and (b) Nagorno-Karabakh"*

The findings showed that the dominant framing in both cases was *primarily normative*. In the Ukraine case, eight out of the ten statements were classified as *primarily normative*, and two as *mixed*. In the Nagorno-Karabakh case, nine were *primarily normative* and only one was *mixed*. Neither cases contained statements that were classified as *primarily strategic*.

The second sub-question asked*: "To what extent does the distribution of framings differ between the two cases, and does any observed imbalance dictate selective or inconsistent application of the EU's normative commitments?* "While the difference in framing distribution (80% vs. 90%) does not cross the threshold for inconsistent as defined in this study's operationalization, deeper analysis of the results suggest that the EU's overall response was more intense and strategically motivated in the Ukraine case. For example, indicators to identity-based framing (N4) and geopolitical stability (S3) were more frequently triggered in the Ukraine statements. The EU also responded with a higher volume and more intense statements, issued four council statements, and imposed sanctions. In contrast, the response to Nagorno-Karabakh was slower, less institutionally and politically prominent, and included less intense statements, some of which were only part of broader political communications. These differences suggest that strategic shapes the volume of response, it institutional and political prioritization, and framing context. Although the EU maintains a normative rhetorical posture, these findings support concerns raised in the critical literature about NPE. Scholars such as Hyde-Price (2006, 2008) and Youngs (2004) argue that the normative discourse can mask strategic motives, while Diez (2005) focusses on how identity-based normative framing may serve strategic political narratives. The thesis findings that even normatively framed statements differ in tone and context in a way that aligns with the EU strategic interests, reflect this literature.

This thesis also speaks to the EU's notion of "*principled pragmatism*", introduced in its 2016 Global Strategy. While this approach allows the EU to navigate through complex geopolitical challenges, it risks undermining normative credibility when values appear to be applied more heavily and intensely in strategically important contexts. These differences between the two cases raise questions about the EU; s consistency in its commitment to its own normative principles.

While the study provided valuable information, the scope of the research was limited to the first ten statements per case. Therefore, longer-term discursive shifts are not included in the analysis. The classification system, while being systematic and transparent, may oversimplify complex rhetoric. Future research could extend the time frame, include more

cases, or may apply qualitative discourse analyses to capture subtle differences in language. Interviews with EU officials could also shed light on internal processes not visible in public statements.

This thesis contributes to the ongoing debate on the EU's global role by empirically examining the discursive consistency as a normative actor. The findings suggest that while the EU retains a normative self-image, its application of varies with strategic relevance. If the EU wants to uphold its credibility as a Normative Power, it must ensure that its values are applied not only when convenient, but also in less visible conflicts with limited strategic value. Improving transparency and reinforcing coherence would help sustain the EU's normative legitimacy in an increasingly contested international order.

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Appendix A

Table 3

Indicator Based Classification for EU Statements (Nagorno-Karabakh)

File name	Official EU-portal	Date (2023)	Issued by	Classification	Indicators
NAGO1	eeas.europa	21-09	HR/VP Borrel (EEAS)	Normative	N1, N2, N3
NAGO2	eeas.europa	28-09	EU delegation to the UN & OSCE	Normative	N1, N2, N3
NAGO3	eeas.europa	29-09	Spokesperson EEAS	Normative	N1, N2, N3
NAGO4	eeas.europa	02-10	EU delegation to the UN & OSCE	Normative	N1
NAGO5	eeas.europa	04-10	HR/VP Borrel	Normative	N2
NAGO6	eeas.europa	09-10	EU delegation to the OSCE	Normative	N1, N2, N3, S3
NAGO7	eeas.europa	17-10	EU delegation to the UN & OSCE	Normative	N1
NAGO8	eeas.europa	19-10	EU delegation to the Council of Europe	Normative	N1, N2
NAGO9	ec.europa	26-09	European Commission	Normative	N1, N2, N3
NAGO10	ec.europa	05-20	European Commission	Mixed	N1, N2, N3, N4, S3, S4

File name: NAGO1

European Union
EXTERNAL ACTION

The Diplomatic Service of the European Union

EEAS > Azerbaijan: Statement by the High Representative on developments in Nagorno-Karabakh

Azerbaijan: Statement by the High Representative on developments in Nagorno-Karabakh

21.09.2023 EEAS Press Team

The European Union condemns the military operation by Azerbaijan against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and deplores the casualties and loss of life caused by this escalation.

We have taken note of the respective announcements that a ceasefire agreement was reached. We expect an immediate and complete cessation of hostilities, and for the ceasefire to be respected.

The EU calls on Azerbaijan to allow immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to the population in need, including through a full re-opening of the Lachin corridor in line with the ICJ Orders of February and July 2023. The humanitarian actors should be able to operate freely. The EU and its Member States stand ready to provide urgent humanitarian assistance.

The EU calls on Baku and Karabakh Armenians to urgently engage in a comprehensive and transparent dialogue.

Azerbaijan bears the responsibility to ensure the rights and security of the Karabakh Armenians, including their right to live in their homes without intimidation and discrimination. Forced displacement of the civilian population through military or other means will be met with a strong response by the EU.

The EU stands ready to take appropriate actions in the event of a further deterioration of the situation.

The EU reiterates its support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Azerbaijan and Armenia. We call on Azerbaijan to reaffirm its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Armenia, in line with the 1991 Almaty Declaration.

The EU stands ready to further support the democratically elected authorities of Armenia: the resilience, security and continuation of democratic reforms in the country. The European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA) will continue to observe and report on the security situation along the Armenian side of the international border with Azerbaijan.

The EU calls for the resumption of negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on all pending issues, in view of the conclusion of a peace treaty, and remains fully committed to supporting such negotiations.

The European Union remains fully committed to facilitating dialogue between the sides, notably under the auspices of the European Council President with support of the EU Special Representative, in order to ensure long-lasting peace for the benefit of all people of the region.

File name: NAGO2

Delegation of the European Union to the International Organisations in Vienna

EEAS > Vienna - International Organisations > OSCE Permanent Council No.1444 Vienna, 28 September 2023

OSCE Permanent Council No.1444 Vienna, 28 September 2023

28.09.2023 Vienna Press and information team of the Delegation to UN and OSCE in Vienna

EU Statement in response to the Current Issue to be raised by the US

Further to our statement from last week, the European Union would like to make the following points:

1. Nagorno-Karabakh is currently emptying of its Armenian population. To date [September 28], reportedly more than 65,000 people, more than half of the population, has found refuge in Armenia. This exodus is taking place in dramatic humanitarian conditions, as shown by the heavy toll from the explosion of a gas station in Stepanakert on the evening of September 25. On that occasion, we express our condolences to the victims of this terrible explosion. We reiterate our call on Azerbaijan to ensure the rights and security of the Karabakh Armenians. Forced displacement of the civilian population through military or other means is not acceptable.
2. We took note of President Aliyev's commitment to live in peace with the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and preserve their rights. This also entails Azerbaijan's responsibility for the fate of the population. Tangible, action-based guarantees need to be provided.
3. In this situation, the priority is to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need in Nagorno-Karabakh. The EU and its Member States stand ready to provide urgent humanitarian assistance. The European Commission announced on Tuesday an assistance package of EUR 5 million.
4. International access to Nagorno-Karabakh is key in order to provide much needed assistance and ensure an independent monitoring of the situation on the ground.
5. The EU reiterates its support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Azerbaijan and Armenia. We call on Azerbaijan to reaffirm its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Armenia, in line with the 1991 Almaty Declaration.
6. The EU remains committed to facilitating dialogue between all sides in order to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable peace for the benefit of all the people of the region.

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

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

File name: NAGO3

The Diplomatic Service of the European Union

EEAS > Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the displacement of people from Nagorno-Karabakh

Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the displacement of people from Nagorno-Karabakh

29.09.2023 EEAS Press Team

A mass exodus of Karabakh Armenians is currently taking place, as a result of Azerbaijan's military operation of 19 and 20 September and of the previous months-long blockage of the Lachin corridor. People are fleeing their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh and are finding refuge in Armenia.

It is urgent to ensure continuous unimpeded humanitarian support to those who are still in need in Karabakh, as well as to those who have left. The European Union supports the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which is facilitating the urgent evacuation of wounded people as well as patients, and the provision of emergency assistance on the ground.

The European Commission announced an additional package of humanitarian aid of EUR 5M to assist people displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and those who find themselves in a vulnerable situation inside Karabakh. The EU and its Member States stand ready to provide additional humanitarian assistance.

Azerbaijan bears the responsibility to ensure the rights and security of the Karabakh Armenians, including their right to live in their homes in dignity without intimidation and discrimination, as well as the right to return for those displaced. It is essential that a UN mission can access the territory within the next days.

The European Union has taken note of the announced launch of a process of registration of Armenian residents through a dedicated portal by the Azerbaijani authorities. The EU will continue following closely the developments on the ground.

File name: NAGO4

Republic of Moldova and Georgia within their internationally recognised borders, and remains fully committed to facilitate efforts to secure sustainable peace and stability in the whole South Caucasus.

5. The EU is deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in Nagorno-Karabakh in light of the ongoing exodus of its local population. We reiterate our call on Azerbaijan to ensure the rights and security of the Karabakh Armenians and to provide tangible, action-based guarantees. The EU reiterates its support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Azerbaijan and Armenia.
6. As our fundamental principles and OSCE commitments continue to be violated on a daily basis, the human dimension of the comprehensive security concept proves to be more important than ever. Russia's external aggression is accompanied by harrowing internal

File name: NAGO5

Crises are everywhere. The recent one, 100,000 people had to leave their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh. If the world shows concern, and [it needs to] do something for that. We can, using all our instruments to advance human rights. We spend money - €1.5 billion - to promote human rights and democracy. And I want to congratulate you, [High] Commissioner [for Human Rights, Volker] Türk, for the work you are doing, and you can count on our support, but certainly, we need to do more.

File name: NAGO6

very timely. As we said last week, there are many topics which this Forum should be discussing and this is certainly one of them. Unfortunately, as a result of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine this issue has a drastic direct impact on the daily lives of citizens and is therefore particularly topical.

In another part of the OSCE area, the exodus of the Armenian population from Nagorno-Karabakh which has been taking place in dramatic humanitarian conditions reflects the importance of effective implementation of international humanitarian law. We reiterate our call on Azerbaijan to ensure the rights and security of the Karabakh Armenians. Forced displacement of the civilian population through military or other means is not acceptable.

All international actors must respect international humanitarian law. In this regard, we remind that Azerbaijan must comply with the interim measures issued by the European Court of Human Rights on 22 September to refrain from taking any measures which might entail

File name: NAGO7

ZMINA - drew attention to the situation of political prisoners in the illegally annexed Crimea. A number of other side events highlighted the deeply worrying link between external aggression and internal repression in in Russia and Belarus, as testified by many in the course of this meeting.

6. The EU continues to closely monitor the dramatic situation arising from the mass exodus of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh in the wake of Azerbaijan's military operation on 19 and 20 September and months of blockade of the Lachin Corridor. Azerbaijan bears the responsibility to ensure the rights and security of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, including their right to live in their homes in dignity, without intimidation and discrimination, and to create the conditions for their safe, dignified and lasting return. Their cultural heritage and their property rights must also be guaranteed and protected by Azerbaijan. For the moment, the priority is to provide humanitarian aid to Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and the EU and its Member States stand ready to provide additional aid in this regard. The EU reaffirms its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Armenia. We call on Azerbaijan to reaffirm its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Armenia, in compliance with the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration.
7. Madam/Mr Moderator,Numerous speakers have deplored the increasing pressure faced by human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders; restrictive legislation; as well as intimidation and violence against journalists and other media

Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe

File name: NAGO8

EEAS > Council of Europe >
1478th meeting of the Committee of Ministers on 18 October 2023 EU statement on Armenia/Azerbaijan

1478th meeting of the Committee of Ministers on 18 October 2023 EU statement on Armenia/Azerbaijan

18.10.2023 Strasbourg Press and information team of the Delegation to the COUNCIL OF EUROPE in Strasbourg

1. The European Union continues to follow with concern the extremely difficult situation arising from the mass exodus of Karabakh Armenians following Azerbaijan's military operation on 19 and 20 September and the nine months-long blockade on the Lachin corridor. Nearly the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh, over 100,600 persons, have found refuge in Armenia.
2. It is imperative to ensure continuous unimpeded humanitarian support to those who are still in need in Karabakh, as well as to those who have left. The European Commission last week announced an additional package of humanitarian aid of EUR 10.45 million on top of the EUR 20.8 million already provided since 2020.
3. Azerbaijan has to ensure the human rights, fundamental freedoms and security of the Karabakh Armenians, including their right to live in their homes in dignity, without intimidation or discrimination, as well as to create the conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons to Nagorno-Karabakh with due respect for their history, culture and human rights. In addition, the cultural heritage and property rights of the local population need to be effectively protected and guaranteed.
4. In this regard, we remind that Azerbaijan must comply with the interim measures indicated by the European Court of Human Rights on 22 September, i.e. to refrain from taking any measures which might entail breaches of their obligations under the

Convention, notably Article 2 (right to life) and Article 3 (prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment).
5. We took note of President Aliyev's public remarks about willingness to live in peace with Karabakh Armenians and preserve their rights. Azerbaijan has a clear primary responsibility for the fate of the population. Tangible, concrete and transparent guarantees must be provided. As an important confidence-building measure, we expect a comprehensive amnesty for all Karabakh Armenians, including their representatives, and restraint by all sides from harsh rhetoric.
6. International access to Karabakh is crucial when it comes to providing much needed assistance and ensuring an independent monitoring of the situation on the ground. The European Union has taken note of the two recent UN visits. We praise the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, who provides support and assistance to the Armenian authorities in handling this massive exodus on its territory, and look forward to the Council of Europe fact-finding mission led by Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatović and its subsequent recommendations.
7. The EU reiterates its support to the sovereignty, inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of both Azerbaijan and Armenia. We call on Azerbaijan to reaffirm its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Armenia, in line with the 1991 Almaty Declaration.
8. The EU remains committed to facilitating dialogue between both sides in order to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable peace for the benefit of all populations in the region.

The following countries align with this statement: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino.

File name: NAGO9

European Commission - Press release

Nagorno-Karabakh: EU provides €5 million in humanitarian aid

Brussels, 26 September 2023

The EU is boosting its humanitarian funding with €5 million in response to the increasing needs resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis. The conflict escalation and subsequent ceasefire is expected to trigger a mass exodus of people from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, with approximately 13 500 refugees having crossed the border already. At the same time, there is a major food shortage and lack of access to electricity and water within the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave.

The €5 million humanitarian funding includes €500 000 of emergency support of emergency support announced last week and €4.5 million new funding, which will:

- **assist people displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.** This aid will be delivered by various EU humanitarian partners operating in Armenia to reach around 25 000 people. The priority is to provide cash assistance, shelter, food security and livelihoods assistance.
- **assist vulnerable people inside Nagorno-Karabakh**. This aid will be channelled through the International Committee of Red Cross and aims to support around 60 000 people with food, healthcare, shelter and logistics.

The EU is also deploying a humanitarian expert to the region who will work hand in hand with humanitarian partners on the ground to ensure a rapid response to the crisis.

Background

Including the new funding announced today, the European Commission has provided more than €25.8 million in humanitarian aid since the conflict escalation in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020. At the outbreak of the 2020 conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Commission promptly responded with €6.9 million in humanitarian support to address the needs of the most vulnerable among the civilians directly affected by the hostilities.

EU humanitarian funding is provided in line with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. The European Commission also plays a key role in facilitating humanitarian coordination and information sharing among various organisations, including donors, authorities and humanitarian partners.

For more information:

EU humanitarian operations in Armenia and Azerbaijan

IP/23/4618

Quotes:

File name: NAGO10

European Commission - Statement

Joint Statement by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, 5 October 2023

Granada, 5 October 2023

We met today in the city of Granada, in the margins of the European Political Community summit hosted by Spain.

We reiterated our condemnation of the military operation by Azerbaijan against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and reaffirmed the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Armenia and Azerbaijan, on the basis of the 1991 Almaty declaration and the understanding that Armenia's territory covers 29,800 km2 and Azerbaijan's 86,600 km2. We also stressed that opening of regional connectivity links should be based on full respect of countries' sovereignty and jurisdiction, as well as on the principles of equality and reciprocity.

Armenia and the EU are bound by shared political values and their commitment to a rules-based international order.

In these difficult times, the EU and Armenia stand shoulder to shoulder.

We are committed to further strengthen EU-Armenia relations.

As we discussed earlier this week, our immediate focus is to attend to the humanitarian needs of the over 100,000 Karabakh Armenians that have fled to Armenia. We discussed how to ensure maximum effectiveness of the humanitarian aid and other immediate support provided by the EU which will reach 10.45 million euros.

President **von der Leyen** also announced that the Commission is mobilising funding to allocate 15 million euros from its annual programme for Armenia to be used as budget support. This will allow the government of Armenia to address urgent socio-economic needs and support purchasing food and fuel.

In the longer run, the European Union and Armenia are determined to reinforce their economic ties, working to bring out the full potential of our Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. In particular, the EU Economic Investment Plan (EIP) for Armenia provides up to 2.6 billion euros to be used for investments in important infrastructure and other projects. The Commission and Armenia will redouble efforts to implement important projects. The Commission will also support Armenia's participation in regional projects such as the Black Sea Electricity Cable. Finally, the Commission will step up technical assistance to Armenia, particularly in the areas of air safety and nuclear safety.

President **von der Leyen** informed of the preparations for a Joint EU-US event to support Armenia.

We will continue discussions on ways in which to strengthen further our relationship in the coming days.

Appendix B

Table 3

Indicator Based Classification for EU Statements (Ukraine)

File name	Official EU-portal	Date (2022)	Issued by	Classification	Indicators
UKR1	eeas.europa	24-02	HR/VP Borrel (EEAS)	Normative	N1, N2, N3
UKR2	ec.europa	24-02	Commission President von der Leyen & Council President Michel	Mixed	N1, N2, S3
UKR3	ec.europa	24-02	Commission President von der Leyen	Normative	N1, N2, N4, S3
UKR4	ec.europa	24-02	European Council	Normative	N1, N2, N4, S3
UKR5	eeas.europa	24-02	HR/VP Borrel (EEAS)	Normative	N1, N2, N3,N4, S3
UKR6	eeas.europa	24-02	EU delegation tot he UN	Normative	N1, N2, N3, S3
UKR7	Consilium.europa	24-02	HR/VP Borrel (Council)	Normative	N1, N2, N3,N4,S3
UKR8	eeas.europa	25-02	European Council	Normative	N1, N2, N4, S3,
UKR9	Consilium.europa	25-02	European Council	Normative	N1, N2, N3, S3
UKR10	Consilium.europa	25-02	HR/VP Borrel (Council)	Mixed	N1, N2, N3, N4, S3, S4

File name:

UKR1

European Union
EXTERNAL ACTION

The Diplomatic Service of the European Union

EEAS >
Russia's aggression against Ukraine: Press Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell

Russia's aggression against Ukraine: Press Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell

24.02.2022 Brussels

Check against delivery!

These are among the darkest hours for Europe since World War II. A major nuclear power has attacked a neighbouring country and is threatening reprisals on any other state that may come to its rescue.

This is not only the greatest violation of international law, it is a violation of the basic principles of human co-existence. It is costing many lives with unknown consequences ahead of us.

The European Union will respond in the strongest possible terms. The President of the European Council, [Charles] Michel has called for a meeting of the European Council this evening. And they will agree and provide political guidance to adopt the strongest package, the harshest package of sanctions we have ever implemented.

As High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, I will be in touch with our partners around the world to ensure the international community will be fully grasping the gravity of the moment and to call strongly and united on Russia to cease immediately this intolerable behaviour and the Russian leadership will face unprecedented isolation.

This is not a question of blocs, this is not a question of diplomatic power games. It is a matter of life and death. It is about the future of our global community.

://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/russias-aggression-against-ukraine-press-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell_en

5/2025, 18:58 Russia's aggression against Ukraine: Press Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell | EEAS

We will stand united with our transatlantic partners and with all European nations in defending this position. We stand united in saying no to violence and destruction as means to obtain political gains.

We, the European Union, remain the strongest group of nations in the world. And this should not be underestimated. We immediately will be designing urgent assistance to Ukraine in this dire situation.

We will also be active in supporting evacuation operations, including of our own staff in zones affected by this Russian attack.

The European Union, together with transatlantic and like-minded partners, have made unprecedented efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to the security crisis caused by Russia, but Russia has not reciprocated these efforts and instead has opted unilaterally for a grave and premeditated escalation conducting to war.

President [of Russia, Vladimir] Putin needs to stop this senseless aggression. Today our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine. We will stand by them.

Link to the video: https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-219140

File name: UKR2

Council of the EU

PRESS
EN

STATEMENTS AND REMARKS
156/22
24/02/2022

Press statement of President Charles Michel of the European Council and President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission on Russia's unprecedented and unprovoked military aggression of Ukraine

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprecedented military aggression against Ukraine. By its unprovoked and unjustified military actions, Russia is grossly violating international law and undermining European and global security and stability.

We call on Russia to immediately cease the hostilities, withdraw its military from Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. Such use of force and coercion has no place in the 21st century.

President Michel of the European Council has urgently convened an extraordinary meeting of the European Council. The EU leaders will meet later today to discuss the crisis and further restrictive measures that will impose massive and severe consequences on Russia for its action, in close coordination with our transatlantic partners. President von der Leyen will outline a further sanctions package being finalised by the European Commission and which the Council will swiftly adopt.

We deplore the loss of life and humanitarian suffering. The EU and its Member States are ready to urgently provide humanitarian emergency response. We call on Russia and Russia-backed armed formations to respect international humanitarian law.

The EU stands firmly by Ukraine and its people as they face this unparalleled crisis. The EU will provide further political, financial and humanitarian assistance.

We are coordinating our response with our international partners, including NATO and G7 whose leaders will meet today.

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File name: UKR3

Press statement by President von der Leyen on Russia's aggression against Ukraine

Brussels, 24 February 2022

Early this morning, Russian troops invaded Ukraine, a free and sovereign country. Once again, in the centre of Europe, innocent women, men and children are dying or fear for their lives. We condemn this barbaric attack, and the cynical arguments to justify it.

It is President Putin, who is bringing war back to Europe. In these dark hours, the European Union and its people stand by Ukraine and its people. We are facing an unprecedented act of aggression by the Russian leadership against a sovereign, independent country. Russia's target is not only Donbas, the target is not only Ukraine, the target is the stability in Europe and the whole of the international peace order. And we will hold President Putin accountable for that.

Later today, we will present a package of massive and targeted sanctions, to European Leaders for approval. With this package, we will target strategic sectors of the Russian economy by blocking their access to technologies and markets that are key for Russia. We will weaken Russia's economic base and its capacity to modernise. And in addition, we will freeze Russian assets in the European Union and stop the access of Russian banks to European financial markets. Like with the first package of sanctions, we are closely aligned with our partners and allies – the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, but also, for example, Japan and Australia. These sanctions are designed to take a heavy toll on the Kremlin's interests and their ability to finance war.

And we know that millions of Russians do not want war. President Putin is trying to turn back the clock to the times of the Russian empire. But in doing so, he is putting at risk the future of the Russian people. I call on Russia to immediately stop the violence and to withdraw its troops from Ukraine's territory. We will not let President Putin tear down the security architecture that has given Europe peace and stability over many decades. We will not allow President Putin to replace the rule of law by the rule of force and ruthlessness. He should not underestimate the resolve and strength of our democracies.

History has proven that societies and alliances built on trust and freedom are resilient and successful. And that is exactly what the autocrats fear. The European Union stands with Ukraine and its people. We will continue to support them. Ukraine will prevail.

STATEMENT/22/1322

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Related media

Press statement by EC President von der LEYEN and HRVP BORRELL on Russia's aggression against Ukraine

Press statement by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and Josep Borrell Fontelles, Vice-President of the European Commission, on Russia's aggression against Ukraine

File name: UKR4

Council of the EU

PRESS
EN

STATEMENTS AND REMARKS
158/22
24/02/2022

Joint statement by the members of the European Council

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprecedented military aggression against Ukraine. By its unprovoked and unjustified military actions, Russia is grossly violating international law and undermining European and global security and stability.

We also condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine and call on it to abide by its international obligations.

We demand that Russia immediately ceases 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. Such use of force and coercion has no place in the 21st century.

We will meet later today to discuss this blatant aggression and agree in principle on further restrictive measures that will impose massive and severe consequences on Russia for its action, in close coordination with our transatlantic partners.

We deplore the loss of life and humanitarian suffering. The EU and its Member States are ready to urgently provide humanitarian emergency response. We call on Russia and Russia-backed armed formations to respect international humanitarian law.

The EU stands firmly by Ukraine and its people as they face this war. The EU will provide further political, financial and humanitarian assistance.

We are coordinating our response with our neighbours and international partners, including NATO and G7 whose leaders will be meeting shortly.

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File name: UKR5

European Union
EXTERNAL ACTION

The Diplomatic Service of the European Union

EEAS >
Russia/Ukraine: Statement delivered by the High Representative Josep Borrell on behalf of the European Union a
the extraordinary OSCE Permanent Council

Russia/Ukraine: Statement delivered by the High Representative Josep Borrell on behalf of the European Union at the extraordinary OSCE Permanent Council

24.02.2022 Brussels

Mr. Chair, on behalf of the EU, I would like to thank you for swiftly convening this extraordinary Permanent Council. These are among the darkest hours for Europe since World War II.

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation.

We demand President Putin to cease Russian military operations immediately and unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it will cause. It will be held accountable for its actions.

We also condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine and call on it to abide by its international obligations.

Russia's military attack against Ukraine - an independent and sovereign State - is a flagrant violation of international law and the core principles on which the international rules-based order is built.

The EU together with transatlantic and like-minded partners have been united in their untiring efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to the security crisis caused by Russia. Russia has not reciprocated these efforts and instead opted unilaterally for a grave and premeditated escalation.

The EU has made clear from the outset and at the highest political level that any further military aggression against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs.

The EU's response will therefore include both sectoral and individual restrictive measures coordinated fully with our transatlantic and like- minded partners.

Russia should be in no doubt that the EU will remain resolutely united as it takes the next steps in close coordination with partners.

The EU calls on the international community to demand from Russia the immediate end of this aggression, which endangers international peace and security at a global scale.

We call on Russia to fully respect international humanitarian law, and to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access and assistance to all persons in need. We also call on Russia to ensure the safety of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

The EU reiterates its unwavering support and commitment to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We stand by the people of Ukraine and its democratically elected institutions and representatives.

The EU also reiterates its unwavering support for, and commitment to, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and of the Republic of Moldova.

I would ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

File name: UKR6

Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in New York

EEAS > UN New York > EU Statement – UN Special Committee on the Charter: Special military operations

EU Statement – UN Special Committee on the Charter: Special military operations

24.02.2022 New York

24 February 2022, New York - Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States by Ms. Simona Popan, Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, at the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

— CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY —

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

As we are sitting in the Charter Committee to discuss issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security, we cannot ignore that, as we speak, **fundamental principles of the Charter are being blatantly violated** by one of the members of the United Nations.

Last night, Russia invaded Ukraine. This **unprovoked act of aggression** is a **serious violation of** Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which **prohibits the threat or use of force** against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. This prohibition is a **peremptory norm** of international law that all States must abide by.

The use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State is unlawful and constitutes an **act of aggression**, as defined by GA Resolution 3314 of 1974, adopted by consensus. Aggression is a **crime** under Article 8bis of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court that requires accountability and triggers individual criminal liability.

Last Monday, President Putin also decided to **recognise the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk** oblasts of Ukraine as independent entities and to send Russian troops into these areas, **as peacekeepers**. These illegal acts further undermined Ukraine's sovereignty and independence, in violation of the principles of the UN Charter.

The Secretary-General expressed his concern about the Russian **perversion of the concept of peacekeeping.** Troops entering the territory of another country without its consent are not impartial peacekeepers. They are, as he pointed out, not peacekeepers at all.

The **EU has adopted a package of sanctions** in response to Russia's illegal actions and the military aggression against Ukraine. The EU stands ready to swiftly adopt more wide-ranging political and economic sanctions, in order to restore international peace and security.

We **condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprecedented military aggression against Ukraine.** By its unprovoked and unjustified military actions, Russia is grossly violating international law and undermining European and global security and stability.

We **call on other States not to remain silent** and to condemn the blatant breaches of the Charter and international law by Russia. These Russian acts undermine the security of all UN Member States.

We also **condemn the involvement of Belarus** in this aggression against Ukraine and call on it to abide by its international obligations.

We demand that **Russia immediately ceases 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. Such use of force has no place in the 21st century.

The European Union and its Member States reiterate their **unwavering support** to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

I thank you.

File name: UKR7

Council of the EU

EN

PRESS RELEASE
157/22
24/02/2022

Ukraine: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation. We also condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine and call on it to abide by its international obligations.

We demand President Putin to cease Russian military operations immediately and unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it will cause. It will be held accountable for its actions.

Russia's military attack against Ukraine – an independent and sovereign State – is a flagrant violation of international law and the core principles on which the international rules-based order is built.

The EU together with transatlantic and like-minded partners have been united in making unprecedented efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to the security crisis caused by Russia. Russia has not reciprocated these efforts and instead opted unilaterally for a grave and premeditated escalation.

The EU has made clear from the outset and at the highest political level that any further military aggression against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs.

The EU's response will therefore include both sectoral and individual restrictive measures coordinated fully with our transatlantic and like-minded partners.

Russia should be in no doubt that the EU will remain resolutely united as it takes the next steps in close coordination with partners.

The EU calls on the international community to demand from Russia the immediate end of this aggression, which endangers international peace and security at a global scale.

We call on Russia to fully respect international humanitarian law, and to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access and assistance to all persons in need. We also call on Russia to ensure the safety of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

The EU reiterates its unwavering support and commitment to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the European Union. We stand by the people of Ukraine and its democratically elected institutions and representatives.

The EU also reiterates its unwavering support for, and commitment to, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and of the Republic of Moldova.

File name: UKR8

Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea

EEAS > South Korea > Joint statement by the members of the European Council

Joint statement by the members of the European Council

25.02.2022 Brussels

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprecedented military aggression against Ukraine. By its unprovoked and unjustified military actions, Russia is grossly violating international law and undermining European and global security and stability.

We also condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine and call on it to abide by its international obligations.

We demand that Russia immediately ceases 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. Such use of force and coercion has no place in the 21st century.

We will meet later today to discuss this blatant aggression and agree in principle on further restrictive measures that will impose massive and severe consequences on Russia for its action, in close coordination with our transatlantic partners.

We deplore the loss of life and humanitarian suffering. The EU and its Member States are ready to urgently provide humanitarian emergency response. We call on Russia and Russia-backed armed formations to respect international humanitarian law.

The EU stands firmly by Ukraine and its people as they face this war. The EU will provide further political, financial and humanitarian assistance.

We are coordinating our response with our neighbours and international partners, including NATO and G7 whose leaders will be meeting shortly.

File name: UKR 9

Council of the EU

EN

PRESS RELEASE
176/22
25/02/2022

Russia's military aggression against Ukraine: EU imposes sanctions against President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov and adopts wide ranging individual and economic sanctions

The EU today decided to sanction **Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation** and **Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.**

The Council 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.

> President Putin and his government started a war against an independent, sovereign neighbouring country. The behaviour of the Russian leadership constitutes a major threat to international peace and security. Today, we are replying with the strongest possible restrictive measures. The European Union is united in its resolve, together with international partners and allies, to defend the peace order, international law and the rules based system.
>
> *Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*

Swiftly implementing the European Council conclusions of 24 February, the package of sanctions adopted today includes:

Individual sanctions

In addition to freezing the assets the **Russian President and Minister of Foreign Affairs**, the EU will **impose restrictive measures** on the **members of the National Security Council** of the Russian Federation who supported Russia's immediate recognition of the two non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine as independent entities. Sanctions will also be extended to the **remaining members of the Russian State Duma**, who ratified the government decision of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Russian Federation and the two entities.

Furthermore, the EU will also target those individuals, who **facilitated the Russian military aggression from Belarus**.

Economic sanctions

Financial sanctions

The package adopted today further **expands the existing financial restrictions**, thereby cutting Russian access to the most important **capital markets**. It also prohibits the listing and provision of services in relation to **shares** of Russian state-owned entities on **EU trading venues**. In addition, it introduces new measures which significantly **limit the financial inflows** from Russia to the EU, by prohibiting the acceptance of deposits exceeding certain values from Russian nationals or residents, the holding of accounts of Russian clients by the EU Central Securities Depositories, as well as the selling of euro-denominated securities to Russian clients.

These sanctions will **target 70% of the Russian banking market, and key state-owned companies**, including in the field of defence. They will increase Russia's borrowing costs, raise inflation and gradually erode Russia's industrial base. Additionally measures are taken to prevent the Russian elite's fortunes from being hidden in **safe havens** in Europe.

Energy sector

The EU will prohibit the sale, supply, transfer or export to Russia of specific goods and technologies in **oil refining**, and will introduce restrictions on the provision of related services.

By introducing such **export ban**, the EU intends to hit the Russian oil sector, and make it impossible for Russia to upgrade its oil refineries.

Russia's export revenues accounted for EUR 24 billion in 2019.

Transport sector

The EU introduced an export ban covering goods and technology in the **aviation and space industry**, as well as a prohibition on the provision of insurance and reinsurance and maintenance services related to those goods and technology. The EU will also prohibit the provision of related technical and financial assistance.

This **ban on the sale of all aircrafts, spare parts and equipment to Russian airlines** will degrade one of the key sectors of Russia's economy and the country's connectivity, as three quarters of Russia's current commercial air fleet were built in the EU, the US and Canada.

Technology sector

The EU imposed further **restrictions on exports of dual-use goods and technology**, as well as restrictions on exports of certain goods and technology which might contribute to Russia's technological enhancement of its **defence and security sector**.

This will include products such as **semiconductors or cutting-edge technologies**.

Visa policy

Diplomats, other Russian officials, and business people will no longer be able to benefit from visa facilitation provisions, which allow privileged access to the EU. This decision will not affect ordinary Russian citizens. The decision will enter into force on the day of the adoption.

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, as well as the involvement of Belarus in this aggression.

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. The European Council calls on Russia and Russia-backed armed formations to respect international humanitarian law and stop their disinformation campaign and cyber-attacks.

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. 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. It will continue strong coordination with partners and allies, within the UN, OSCE, NATO and the G7.

The relevant legal acts, including the names of the persons concerned by restrictive measures, will be published in the Official Journal.

Background

Individual restrictive measures will apply to a total of **654 individuals** and **52 entities**, and include an **asset freeze** and **a prohibition from making funds available** to the listed individuals and entities. In addition, a **travel ban** applicable to the listed persons prevents these from entering or transiting through EU territory.

- Official Journal of the EU, 25 February 2022 (including a list of the sanctioned individuals and entities - L050, L051, L052, L053, L054)
- EU adopts package of sanctions in response to Russian recognition of the non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine and sending of troops into the region (press release, 23 February 2022)
- European Council conclusions, 24 February 2022
- G7 Leaders' Statement on the invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation (press release, 24 February 2022)
- Ukraine: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation (press release, 24 February 2022)
- EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine

File name: UKR 10

Council of the EU

EN

PRESS RELEASE
171/22
25/02/2022

Ukraine: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol

Eight years on from the violent, illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, the European Union remains steadfast in its commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. Further violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity have now taken place with Russia's recent unprovoked military attack against Ukraine and its decision to recognise the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine as independent entities.

The European Union reiterates that it does not recognise and continues to condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea as a violation of international law. It remains a direct challenge to international security, with grave implications for the international legal order that protects the territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of all States.

The European Union remains committed to fully implementing its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures and cooperation in international fora. The European Union calls again on UN Member States to consider similar non-recognition measures in line with the UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 of 27 March 2014. The European Union does not and will not recognise the holding of elections and referenda by the Russian Federation in the Crimean peninsula.

The increasing militarisation of the peninsula by the Russian Federation, including multiple military exercises and the construction of warships, continues to have a negative impact on the security situation in the Black Sea region. In violation of international humanitarian law, Russia has imposed citizenship and conscription into its armed forces on Crimean residents. In accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 76/70 of 9 December 2021, the European Union recalls the negative effects of the illegal annexation on regional stability, as shown by the unjustified use of military force by Russia against Ukraine on 25 November 2018.

Furthermore, the Russian Federation must stop changing the demographic structure on the peninsula by the resettlement of its own civilian population to the peninsula and by persecution of Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians.

The European Union condemns the construction of the Kerch Bridge and the opening of a railway section without Ukraine's consent. These steps constitute further attempts to forcibly integrate the illegally annexed peninsula into Russia, and a further violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU expects Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage of all ships through the Kerch Strait to and from the Azov Sea, in accordance with international law. The ongoing illegal restrictions to such passage have negative economic consequences for Ukraine's ports in the Azov Sea, as well as for the region as a whole.

The EU does not recognise other attempts by the Russian Federation to forcibly integrate the illegally annexed peninsula into Russia. This includes the Russian presidential decree on land ban ownership for non-Russian citizens, as well as the holding of all Russian census on the peninsula.

Since the illegal annexation by the Russian Federation, the human rights situation in the Crimean peninsula has significantly deteriorated. Having in mind the landmark decision of the European Court of Human Rights of 14 January 2021, the European Union calls for Russia's full compliance with international humanitarian law, international human rights standards, and relevant UN General Assembly Resolutions, including 76/179 of 16 December 2021. Residents of the peninsula face systematic restrictions of their fundamental freedoms, such as the freedoms of expression, religion or belief and association, and the right to peaceful assembly. Journalists, human rights defenders and defence lawyers face interference and intimidation in their work. The Crimean Tatars in particular continue to be unacceptably persecuted, pressured and have their rights gravely violated, especially through arbitrary arrests and detentions. All ethnic and religious communities in the peninsula must be ensured the possibility to maintain and develop their culture, language, education, identity and cultural heritage traditions, which are currently threatened by the illegal annexation. Destructive actions against the peninsula's cultural heritage, such as archaeological treasures, artworks, museums or historical sites, which continue unabated, must stop.

In accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 76/179 of 16 December 2021, it is crucial that regional and international human rights monitoring mechanisms as well as non-governmental human rights organisations have unimpeded access to Crimea and Sevastopol. All pending cases of human rights violations and abuses, such as enforced disappearances, torture and killings, violence, politically motivated prosecutions, discrimination and harassment must be thoroughly investigated. The European Union does not recognise the enforcement of Russian legislation in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and expects all illegally detained to be released without delay. We condemn the recent politically motivated mass detentions of Crimean Tatars. All those detained in the Crimean peninsula and sentenced in breach of international law, including Nariman Dzhelyal, Emir-Usein Kuku and his five co-defendants, Oleh Prykhodko, Halyna Dovhopola, Enver Omerov, Riza Omerov and Ayder Dzhapparov, must be immediately released. The ban on the activities of the Mejlis, a self-governing body of the Crimean Tatars, must be reversed. Russia must also take measures to improve the environmental situation, which has considerably worsened since the illegal annexation.

The EU welcomes and supports diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The European Union will continue to work for a peaceful end of Russia's illegal annexation of the peninsula, as reiterated in the joint declaration of the first summit of the International Crimea Platform held on 23 August 2021. The EU will continue working towards the implementation of the Joint Declaration.

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation. We also condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine and call on it to abide by its international obligations.

Russia's military attack against Ukraine - an independent and sovereign State - is a flagrant violation of international law and the core principles on which the international rules-based order is built.

The EU together with transatlantic and like-minded partners have been united in making unprecedented efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to the security crisis caused by Russia. Russia has not reciprocated these efforts and instead opted unilaterally for a grave and premeditated escalation.

We demand President Putin to cease Russian military operations immediately and unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it will cause. It will be held accountable for its actions.

The EU has made clear from the outset and at the highest political level that any further military aggression against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs, coordinated fully with our transatlantic and like-minded partners.

Furthermore, the EU strongly condemns the decision by President Putin to recognise the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine as independent entities and the ensuing decision to send Russian troops into these areas. This illegal act further undermines Ukraine's sovereignty and independence and is a severe breach of international law and international agreements, including the UN Charter, Helsinki Final Act, Paris Charter and Budapest Memorandum.

As a signatory of the Minsk agreements, Russia has a clear and direct responsibility to work to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict in line with these principles. With the decision to recognise the non-government controlled region of eastern Ukraine as "independent states", Russia is clearly violating the Minsk agreements, which stipulate the full return of these areas to the control of the Ukrainian government.

We urge Russia, as a party to the conflict, to reverse the recognition, uphold its commitments, abide by international law and return to the discussions within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group.

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania*, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

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

This Declaration is issued on the 8th anniversary of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, commemorated by Ukraine on 26 February 2022.

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