

Reinforcing our support and appreciation for the work of the OSCE

Thank you Mr President, and thank you Chair-in-Office, Foreign Minister Rau, for your briefing, and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for yours.

I would like first to pay tribute to the bravery and dedication of OSCE staff, and in particular to Maryna Fenina, a Ukrainian Special Monitoring Mission employee, who was killed in the Russian shelling of Kharkiv on March 1 while getting medicine for her family.

For decades, the OSCE has worked to bring security to Europe.

And yet, we meet today in the middle of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine – one OSCE signatory tearing up the rulebook and pursuing war against another, as Foreign Minister Rau said, as if the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law never existed.

President Putin's war violates fundamental principles of both the OSCE and the United Nations: sovereignty; inviolability of borders; respect for territorial integrity; and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

This war is a threat to us all. To the systems we have built together to preserve peace. It's a threat too to the peace and security of millions of people in Europe, Africa and Asia who rely on agricultural, energy and commodity supply chains – already profoundly disrupted by Russia's invasion.

We recognise the extensive efforts, which Foreign Minister Rau described, which the OSCE has made to try and avoid this catastrophe:

Russia was offered a chance to raise any security concerns in the OSCE Renewed European Security Dialogue – but said it was not the right time. We now know they were planning war all along.

Ukraine and others invoked the OSCE Vienna Document Risk Reduction Mechanism – to seek transparency from Russia and Belarus and to de-escalate the situation. Russia refused to engage.

And of course, the OSCE has worked for years to support implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Russia is accused of the gravest war crimes – bombing schools, hospitals and homes; targeting families as they try to run to safety. We welcome action taken under the Moscow Mechanism to hold Russia to account. The OSCE fact-finding mission must be given full access so that evidence can be gathered.

Finally Mr President, I would like to stress that we continue to support the vital role of the OSCE field missions in Central Asia and the Western Balkans, including through its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. We strongly support OSCE efforts to facilitate a peaceful resolution

of the conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The United Kingdom remains steadfast in our support and appreciation for the work of the OSCE, and for Poland's Chairmanship at this critical time.

I thank you, Mr President.