



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States

169th session of the Council

(8 April 2022)

Item 3: Impact of the Ukraine-Russia conflict on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr Chair,

- 1.** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The Candidate Countries North Macedonia* and Montenegro*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Norway and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
- 2.** This special session of the FAO Council – the first in decades - , a session at the request of 22 council members and 58 observers, has a cause: the illegal, unprovoked, unjustifiable aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.
- 3.** It also has a purpose: to examine how the FAO can, on the one hand, provide support to Ukraine and, on the other hand, contribute towards preventing what the United Nations Secretary General has rightly described as the risk of a “hurricane of hunger and a meltdown of the global food system”, endangering the poorest in particular.
- 4.** As regards the cause, we have been facing an unprecedented situation since the Russian Federation launched its unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal aggression against Ukraine. We express our strong solidarity and support for Ukraine and its people.
- 5.** Since this aggression, we are witnessing a surge in food, fertiliser and energy prices, which exceed the levels reached during the last major food crisis in 2011, with an immediate impact on world food security and nutrition, which had already deteriorated significantly as a result of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to recall that, even before the war, the Russian Federation had introduced export restrictions on

fertilisers, which have raised the global price to unprecedented levels. Its recent full export bans have led to further price increases.

6. The EU and its Member States strongly condemn the war waged by the Russian Federation against the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. Russia's aggression against Ukraine grossly violates international law and causes massive loss of life and injury to civilians. Russia's actions seriously undermine international security and stability, with ramifications far beyond Europe. We strongly call for the immediate cessation of the use of force against Ukraine, including the targeting of civilians and their food supply and agricultural production as well as key transport and export infrastructure, which is in contravention to the Additional Protocols of the Geneva Conventions and resolution 2417 (2018) of the United Nations Security Council, poses a serious threat to Ukrainian agricultural production and is causing increased global food insecurity.
7. Russia and Ukraine are both major producers and exporters of several agricultural commodities. Ukraine also supplies half of the WFP's grain. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is fuelling the price rise and jeopardising the global food security. As a result of Russia's military aggression, Ukraine has lost access to the Black Sea trading routes through its seaports. Insecurity has increased considerably for ships heading for the Black Sea region. Russia's war against Ukraine has endangered critical storage infrastructure and agricultural processing facilities and this has already led to a drop in food production and availability in Ukraine. It is thereby undermining food security, both in the region and in those countries that are heavily dependent on Ukrainian agricultural products and farm inputs. Unless it is stopped, Russia's invasion of Ukraine will have a major long-term impact on Ukrainian production of wheat, maize and sunflower as illustrated in the FAO's preliminary assessment. The immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of the Russian army from Ukraine should be the very first FAO policy recommendation in its list of the recommendations at the end of its background document CL 169/3.
8. The Council should not be fooled by Russia's attempts to deflect the critics by placing the blame on others, and in particular on sanctions. The sanctions are targeting its ability to finance the aggression. They do not target the Russia Federation's agricultural sector. They are primarily directed at the Russian government, the financial sector and the economic elites. Any negative impact on agricultural production in Ukraine, and therefore on global food security is a result of the destabilising effects of Russia's aggression and military activities on Ukrainian soil.
9. As regards the purpose of this special session, given the complexity and the magnitude of the situation, it is essential that the FAO, in accordance with its mandate, continues to fully utilise its staff and resources to address the consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on global food security, nutrition and agriculture. We would like to recognise the

efforts already made by the FAO to address the situation and we thank it for the information provided and the documents provided so far. We also recognise the hard work of the FAO's staff and would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and thanks for their commitment.

10. The EU and its Member States would like to highlight the following specific actions to be carried out in response to the current context.
11. First of all, it is of the utmost importance to ensure that in Ukraine the sowing, cultivation and harvesting of the upcoming spring and winter crops take place under good conditions, in order to guarantee food security and nutrition for the Ukrainian population, as well as Ukraine's contribution to the global food supply and market balance. In this regard, we request FAO to work with the Ukrainian Government to address the situation faced by small and large-scale farmers who are confronted by serious challenges as regards access to inputs, which is detrimental to Ukraine's agricultural production, and hence to global food security and nutrition. We would also request FAO to include in its briefings an assessment of the damage done to Ukraine's agricultural production and support infrastructure.
12. Secondly, as the UNSG has underlined, the Russian invasion has direct consequences for the world food security and nutrition. The FAO has a key role to play in providing detailed, neutral, accurate and regularly updated information and data on the effects of the war on food systems, including trends in agri-food commodity and fertiliser prices. It also has an essential role to play in identifying situations and populations at risk of food insecurity, relying in particular on its GIEWS Early Warning System and the work of the Global Network against Food Crises.
13. We call on the FAO to fully support AMIS and to urge FAO members to provide full transparency and all necessary information on flows and stocks to make AMIS functional. We also call on the FAO to work closely with bodies such as WFP, IFAD, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and other relevant organisations, including international financial institutions, taking into account the recent creation by the UNSG of the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, to combat the worsening of food insecurity.
14. The FAO must draw up immediate, medium-term and longer-term plans to address the global food security and nutrition impacts of the war in Ukraine, including emergency response, recovery assistance and resilience building in food systems. We expect the FAO to inform and consult with members on a regular basis, including the FAO governing bodies. FAO should also consider the impact of the war when adjusting its Strategic Framework and Programme of Work and Budget. We stress that we should not lose sight

of the continuous threats which climate change and biodiversity loss pose for food security and nutrition. The transition towards sustainable and resilient food systems will continue to require significant synergetic efforts by all.

- 15.** Finally, we would stress the need for international coordination to avoid market runaway and ensure the efficient functioning of markets, in particular by avoiding export restrictions and speculative behaviour that endangers food security or access to food for vulnerable countries. The integrity of food supply chains must be preserved, and it is essential in this context to maintain global production capacity. This means encouraging sustainable local production in countries in vulnerable situations to reduce the risk of food insecurity and malnutrition and enhance the resilience of food systems. These are also the aims of the FARM (Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission) initiative recently launched at the G7 summit and at the last Council of European Heads of States and Governments. We will continue to support Ukraine and intensify our cooperation with international organisations and other key stakeholders to address the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on global food security in a timely and effective manner.
- 16.** Mister Chair, the next FAO Council scheduled for June should allow us to take stock of FAO's response, in cooperation with other organisations and bodies, to the deterioration in world food security and nutrition due to the Russia's aggression against Ukraine and we therefore request to include it this item in its agenda.
- 17.** In conclusion, let me refer to the draft decision set out in the annex to the letter which the 22 FAO Council members and 58 Council observers sent to request this extraordinary Council session. This draft decision addresses the essence of all the points the EU and its Member States have just made, and reflects the expectations of the signatory 22 members towards the FAO in response to this crisis. We therefore expect the Council to endorse "en bloc" this draft decision.

Thank you, Mr Chair.