



**Statement by Ukraine  
to the 10<sup>th</sup> Joint session of EMEP Steering Body  
and Working Group on Effects  
(Air Convention)  
9-13 September 2024**

**Dear Chair,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

*Thank you for giving me the floor now, as what I would like to highlight is related to each of the agenda items of this meeting and resonates across all global discussions on environmental protection.*

It's an honour to be here with all of you on this September day, marking the beginning of the international season in Geneva. But for my country, September began not with hope, but with tragedy.

The world has witnessed as Russia relentlessly bombards Ukraine with missile strikes, targeting civilians and vital infrastructure in our major cities: Lviv, Poltava, Kharkiv, Kryvyi Rih, Kherson, Pavlohrad... Even on the first day of the school year, Russia "greeted" Kyiv's children with missiles. The Kremlin regime continues its terror, claiming innocent lives, wiping out entire families, reducing our cities to rubble, damaging infrastructure facilities, leaving millions in darkness and, last but not least, devastating the environment.

As we gather here to find solutions to combat air pollution, the harsh reality for Ukraine is that nearly a thousand days into this full-scale invasion, and ten years of Russia's aggression, we are struggling with not just environmental degradation, but also the toxic aftermath of war.

Some figures for your consideration:

- Explosions have released approximately 708,000 tons of toxic gases into the atmosphere, contributing to global environmental harm. This poses a direct challenge to the goals of the Air Convention, which seeks to mitigate such cross-border pollution.

- The cost of pollutants from the war has been estimated at €24.33 billion, with 180 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions recorded as a direct result of hostilities. These emissions undermine international efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas levels and could potentially set back progress toward climate targets, including commitments under the Paris Agreement.

- To date, there have been 4,926 documented cases of environmental damage, preliminarily valued at over €2.4 trillion.

- Daily shelling of critical infrastructure and civilian objects has caused fires, leading to widespread destruction of ecosystems and significant air pollution.

The scale of environmental destruction Ukraine has suffered due to Russian aggression is unprecedented.

**Dear Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues,**

Despite these barbaric assaults, Ukraine stands firm. We are resilient. We are united. And with the support of our partners and allies, we will overcome these challenges. We fight not only for our sovereignty but for the values of freedom and justice that unite all democratic nations. Let this serve as a call to action—for justice, for solidarity, and for the unwavering defense of our shared humanity.

We strive to achieve justice, which means punishing Russia as a state and receiving compensation, as well as bringing to justice those involved in crimes against the environment - both from the command and control staff and the executors.

There is a huge amount of work ahead, and in many respects we will be pioneers. We call on a wide range of international stakeholders to join our initiatives. Only together will we be able to protect our planet and bring the aggressor to justice. Comprehensive accountability for all of Russia's international crimes will be the best safeguard against such devastating wars in the future.

We demand, in the strongest possible terms, that the Russian Federation immediately cease its aggression and withdraw all military forces from the entire sovereign territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. This is not a request, but an obligation under international law.

*We would like this statement to be reflected in the report of the meeting.*