



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1353 Vienna, 3 February 2022

EU Statement on “Russia’s Ongoing Aggression against Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea”

1. The European Union condemns Russia’s continued aggressive actions and threats against Ukraine. Unacceptable demands put forward by Russia are accompanied by heightened rhetoric by its politicians and senior officials and by military build-up and movements near the border with Ukraine, in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and in the Black Sea region. We are also concerned about the large-scale deployment of Russia’s troops to Belarus, including near its border with Ukraine. We call on Russia to de-escalate, to abide by international law and to engage constructively in dialogue through the established international mechanisms. Together with our transatlantic and like-minded partners, we have been clear that any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs. This includes a wide array of sectoral, financial and individual restrictive measures.
2. It was worrying to hear from SMM Chief Monitor Cevik last Monday that the security situation on the ground remains volatile with continued presence of Minsk-proscribed weapons in the conflict zone. The 60% decrease in the number of ceasefire violations in the weeks after the recommitment made in December last year shows that it is possible to improve the situation along the contact line if the political will is there. However, it is disheartening that the daily number of ceasefire violations in January this year was double that of January 2021. The rising toll of casualties among Ukrainian servicemen is also deeply concerning.
3. Given the increased regional tensions as a result of Russia’s continued aggressive actions and threats against Ukraine, the work of the SMM is even more important.

We fully support the work of the SMM, including its impartial monitoring. We are therefore deeply concerned by Russia's continued actions to minimize the presence of the SMM in the non-government controlled areas of Ukraine and its attempts to influence its operations. The SMM is mandated to monitor the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and any requests that the Mission should pre-notify its presence violates its freedom of movement. In addition, it is deeply regrettable that the current restrictions on the SMM's crossings of the entry- and exit checkpoints at the contact line to the Luhansk region of Ukraine results in the Mission taking two days to reach this region from the government-controlled side. We urge the Russian Federation to respect the SMM's mandate as agreed by all participating States and ensure that all restrictions affecting the SMM's work are lifted immediately.

4. We fully support the efforts of the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group in working towards a sustainable political solution to the conflict and we welcome the meetings held in both formats last week. We are encouraged by the renewed commitment of the sides, expressed at the last meeting of the N4 advisors in Paris on 26 January, to pursue discussions in the Normandy format towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and the observance of the ceasefire. The N4 advisors have also underlined the importance to intensify the work within the TCG. However, we regret that Russia still attempts to advance a distorted narrative by asserting that it is merely a mediator of the conflict. As a N4 member and a signatory of the Minsk agreements, Russia has clearly accepted its responsibility in the peaceful settlement of the conflict. We call on Russia, as a party to the conflict, to engage constructively in the discussions and to implement the Minsk agreements in full.
5. We reiterate our strong support for the core principles on which European security is built, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, notably: the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States; the inviolability of internationally recognised borders; the freedom of countries to decide their foreign policy and to choose their own security arrangements and; refraining from the threat or use of force. These principles are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or re-

interpretation. Their violation is the greatest obstacle to a common, indivisible security space in the OSCE region.

6. We underline the importance of a renewed and substantial dialogue in line with the key principles that underpin European security and stand ready to actively contribute to such a debate and address security concerns of all participating States. The OSCE is the most appropriate and inclusive platform to this effect. We firmly support the Polish CiO's initiative to swiftly launch a specific process with a focus on military transparency, risk reduction, incident prevention, conflict management and non-military aspects of security.
7. The EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution to the conflict in line with OSCE principles and commitments. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility in this regard and to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We again call on Russia to immediately stop fueling the conflict by providing financial and military support to the armed formations, and we remain deeply concerned about the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations. The duration of the European Union's sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.
8. The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to uphold these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. The European Union will remain committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures.

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

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