



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council No. 1356 Vienna, 21 February 2022

EU Statement on “The situation in and around Ukraine, including the deteriorating situation in eastern Ukraine”

1. Mr. Chair, we appreciate your decision to swiftly convene this urgently needed meeting at this critical time for European security.
2. Russia’s aggressive and threatening actions and its unprecedented and large-scale military build-up near the border with Ukraine, including through the deployment of combat forces in, and the joint drills with, Belarus remain of grave concern. The announced prolongation of these joint military drills sends a further worrying signal. Moreover, Russia’s increased military presence in the Black and Azov Seas and in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula, as well as the closure of large parts of the Black Sea, remain worrisome and add to the current escalation and the threat of the use of force also in the maritime domain. The EU urges Russia to de-escalate by a substantial withdrawal of military forces from the proximity of Ukraine’s borders.
3. This escalation is now compounded by the increase in ceasefire violations along the line of contact in eastern Ukraine in recent days. The EU condemns the use of heavy weaponry and indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, which constitute a clear violation of the Minsk agreements and international humanitarian law. We commend Ukraine’s posture of restraint in the face of continued provocations and efforts at destabilisation.
4. We welcome the OSCE Secretary General’s early warning call on the risk of further escalation of the already dire security situation with regard to Ukraine, made last week in line with the tasking of the Vilnius 3/11 MC Decision on elements of the Conflict Cycle.
5. The EU is extremely concerned that staged events, as noted recently, could be used as a pretext for possible military escalation. The EU is also witnessing an intensification of

information manipulation efforts to support such objectives. The EU sees no ground for allegations coming from the non-governmental controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of a possible Ukrainian attack. Echoing the joint statement of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau and the OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, we deplore the spread of disinformation.

6. As stated before, any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs in response, including restrictive measures coordinated with partners.
7. Dialogue in line with the key principles that underpin European security, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter and subsequent OSCE documents, is the way to improve the security situation and to safeguard peace and stability on our continent. We again call on Russia to engage constructively and in good faith in dialogue through the established international mechanisms. The OSCE is the appropriate forum to address any security concern by any participating State. We stand ready to make full use of all available tools, procedures and mechanisms within the OSCE, including the Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue, and we call on other participating States to do the same. 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.
8. We recall our principled position that the full implementation of the Minsk agreements is the only way forward. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard as a party to the conflict. We strongly support the efforts of both the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict, in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. In this regard, we regret that Russia did not participate in the extraordinary meetings of the TCG convened on 19 and on 20 February by the CiO Special Representative Ambassador Kinnunen in order to defuse tensions, linking its attendance to certain political preconditions.
9. We also deplore the Russian State Duma's call to President Putin to recognize the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine as independent entities. Such a recognition would be condemnable and a clear violation of the Minsk

agreements and of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It would also seriously undermine the work of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group in finding a peaceful settlement to this conflict.

10. We firmly express our support to the work of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which is of crucial importance to get objective information from the ground, and whose observers play a key role in de-escalation efforts, in particular in the current situation. We urge Russia to ensure that the Mission can fully implement its mandate and has full freedom of movement and access to the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Monitoring and verification by the OSCE of the Russia-Ukraine state border in accordance with the Minsk agreements is also of paramount importance.
11. We urge Russia to abide by its commitments under the Vienna Document and to follow up on the recommendations put forward by participating States during the joint PC-FSC meeting held on 18 February. Notably: to provide full transparency on its military activities in the region, to host visits to the areas which are the cause of concern, to take significant and verifiable steps to de-escalate the situation and to provide information on the reported redeployment of Russian units from the locations of military exercises.
12. 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.
13. 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.