



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1311 Vienna, 29 April 2021

EU Statement on the recommendations put forward at the joint PC-FSC meeting of 14 April 2021

During the joint PC-FSC meeting of 14 April 2021, the EU and many other participating States expressed their concerns about the unusual military activities of the Russian Federation in the areas adjacent to the state border of Ukraine and in the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol. Such large-scale troop movements, which were without prior notification, and the associated military build-up have the potential to destabilise the security situation.

We are also concerned about other escalatory actions by Russia, which include the announcement of the closure of certain parts of the Black Sea until October 2021. They occur against a backdrop of the worrying trend of increasing numbers of ceasefire violations and an increase in the presence of Minsk-proscribed weapons in violation of withdrawal lines in non-government controlled areas, in particular an increase of 78 % in the training areas there, as well as the growing interference with SMM technological assets, which obstructs the SMM in fulfilling its mandate. All these actions are of grave concern to us and we have repeatedly urged Russia to de-escalate and reduce tensions.

We take note of the announcement last Thursday by the Russian Minister of Defence of the withdrawal of some troops at the border with Ukraine, which was a first step in the right direction. These announcements must now be followed by action. We will continue to monitor the situation on the ground closely.

Consistent with the recommendations put forward by the EU in the joint PC-FSC meeting, we urge Russia to re-engage in good faith in a meaningful dialogue and constructive consultations in line with the Vienna Document and to de-escalate the situation. In this regard, it is key to refrain from actions and rhetoric that lead to heightened tensions. We also urge Russia to provide full transparency on its military activities and to voluntarily host a visit to dispel concerns about these activities.

We look forward to the Vienna Document inspection that Switzerland and Finland are planning to conduct in the Voronezh area of Russia in May.

We also suggest to have discussions on the follow-up of these recommendations at upcoming FSC meetings.

The EU reaffirms its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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