



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1365 Vienna, 31 March 2022

EU Statement on the Extension of the Mandate of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

1. The European Union takes note of the information shared by the Chair that the Russian Federation is not in a position to agree to an extension of the mandate of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine beyond 31 March. The EU deeply regrets this announcement by Russia. But we are not surprised. In the context of its war on Ukraine, Russia seems determined to dismantle every single OSCE commitment and international obligation, every single security guarantee on the ground, hampering any opportunity for impartial information and reporting of the true security situation in Ukraine. This was also the case when Russia refused to extend the Border Observation Mission to Gukovo and Donetsk last autumn.
2. The EU and its Member States reiterate their full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We condemn in the strongest terms Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and brutal war of aggression against the independent and sovereign Ukraine, with the active support of Belarus as co-aggressor. We demand that Russia immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. The EU position on Russia's gross violation of the international law, the UN Charter and the OSCE principles and commitments has been clearly stated at the Permanent Council. Russia is solely responsible for the deterioration of the security situation on the ground that necessitated the temporary evacuation and relocation of the SMM international and national staff in the first place. We still mourn the tragic death of SMM's national staff member, Maryna Fenina, as well as thousands of other innocent civilian victims of Russia's military aggression.

3. Our position on the SMM's role and importance is also well known. The SMM is a unique OSCE Mission, which has been pursuing invaluable work in gathering information and reporting on the situation in Ukraine under the principles of impartiality. The monitors on the ground have proven their added value in facilitating dialogue, negotiating local ceasefires and improving the lives of the Ukrainian people. This work has been essential, as Russia has been trying to destabilise Ukraine through aggression since 2014. The EU fully supports the SMM and commends the Mission and its staff for their dedicated and fruitful work in fulfilling its mandate in unprecedented and challenging circumstances.
4. The EU considers it of utmost necessity that the SMM's important work continues and its mandate is extended. We support the Chair and we intend to participate actively in any consultations on the way forward. We will also be supportive to the Secretary General and her team and thank them again for their tireless efforts during the temporary evacuation and relocation of the SMM personnel.
5. We strongly urge Russia to reconsider its position, in order to allow the SMM to continue its important work and to demonstrate in words and in deeds that Russia is committed to returning to dialogue and cooperation.