



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1344 Vienna, 11 November 2021**

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

1. It has now been over seven years since the start of Russia’s acts of aggression in eastern Ukraine and its illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which continue to represent a major threat to the European security order. This is why the European Union continues to follow with concern the current worsening security situation in Ukraine and Russia’s actions near Ukraine’s borders and in the Crimean peninsula closely. In this context, the public reports about a possible renewed military build-up by Russia close to the border with Ukraine would be, if confirmed, disturbing. We will continue to follow developments, in close dialogue with our likeminded partners. We would like to remind Russia about its obligations under the Vienna Document regarding transparency on movement of troops and about the recommendations put forward by participating States at the joint PC-FSC meeting of 14 April.
2. We also remain deeply concerned about the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in the sovereign territory of Ukraine. The SMM reports frequently about Russian military equipment in the non-government controlled areas. These reports underline the need for greater transparency about what is happening at the parts of the Ukraine-Russia State border currently not under the control of the Ukrainian government. Following its decision not to extend the Border Observation Mission, further actions are needed from Russia in order to prove its commitment under the Minsk agreements with regard to OSCE border monitoring.
3. The safety and security of the SMM is of utmost priority. We are therefore concerned about the increased restrictions to the SMM’s freedom of movement in the non-

government controlled areas, the increasingly severe jamming and targeting of SMM technical assets by small-arms fire as well as the increasingly aggressive rhetoric against the Mission. In addition, the recent events in the non-government controlled area of the Donetsk region where SMM patrols were unable to leave their premises for over a week and the reported security incident in Bolotene on 6 November, when a non-SMM UAV flew over an SMM patrol, are deplorable. The SMM is our common asset on the ground for impartial and facts-based monitoring. The SMM should have full and unhindered access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including the border areas temporarily not under Ukrainian government control and the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We fully support the SMM in its important work and urge the Russian Federation to ensure that all restrictions to the SMM's work are removed.

4. Madam Chair, the European Union would like to reiterate that the Minsk agreements are unambiguous in stating that the TCG consists of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE. Russia has therefore clearly accepted its binding responsibility in the peaceful settlement of the conflict and the implementation of the Minsk agreements. A prolonged stand-still in the TCG, which is detrimental both to the security and the humanitarian situation in the conflict zone, needs to be avoided. In this respect, Russia's attempts to legitimize the so-called "people's republics" in eastern Ukraine are not constructive. We decisively reject the Russian narrative of portraying itself as a mediator of an "internal Ukrainian conflict" and we call on Russia, as a party to the conflict, to engage constructively in the TCG discussions and to implement the Minsk agreements in full.
5. 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 fuelling 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.

6. 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 the 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.