



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1326 Vienna, 29 July 2021

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

FINAL (783 words)

1. Madam Chair, the additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire, which were agreed one year ago, had resulted in a considerable stabilisation of the ceasefire. This showed that if there is a political will, progress is possible. We therefore regret that the security situation has deteriorated during the last months. It is especially troubling, as Ambassador Grau pointed out in the press release after the latest TCG, that the territory around the disengagement area near Zolote is a new hotspot and that the SMM continues to record an increase in the use of heavy weapons. In addition to this, we see that there are increased damages to civilian properties. Last week, the SMM reported 16 damaged properties, including 13 inhabited houses and a functioning school.
2. The unprecedented restrictions that the SMM is facing on its freedom of movement are deeply worrying as they affect the SMM’s ability to fulfil its mandate. The SMM is being denied access on an almost daily basis in the areas under effective control of the Russia-backed armed formations, and their UAVs are constantly subjected to jamming. Again last week, two mini UAVs were targeted by small-arms fire. We urge Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to make sure that all restrictions on the SMM’s freedom of movement are removed so that the SMM and its assets can have safe and secure access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including Crimea.

3. We reject the Russian narrative of portraying itself as a mediator of an “internal Ukrainian conflict”, thus obstructing meaningful discussions in the TCG as well as in the Normandy format. The Minsk Protocol signed by the Russian Federation is 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. In this respect, Russia’s attempts to legitimize the so-called “people’s republics” in eastern Ukraine are not constructive. The Package of Measures only provides for consultations with so-called “representatives of the certain areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions” with regard to constitutional amendments and the special order of local self-government (special status) as well as the law on local elections. It does not provide for such consultations with regard to the other provisions of the Package of Measures. We urge Russia, as a party to the conflict, to engage constructively in the TCG discussions and to implement the Minsk agreements in full.
4. We deplore the issuing of Russian passports on a massive scale to Ukrainian citizens in a simplified and selective manner. We are also concerned about the resolution adopted by Russia’s Central Election Commission on 20 July stating that residents of the Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk who have obtained a Russian passport can register and cast their vote online in the September 19 elections. Such measures violate the sovereignty of Ukraine, contradict the objectives of the Minsk agreements and impede the future reintegration process.
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 the 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 REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and 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.