



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1354 Vienna, 10 February 2022**

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

1. The European Union welcomes the inaugural high-level event on the Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue this Tuesday, a timely confidence-building initiative of the Polish Chair that we staunchly support. The EU strongly believes that dialogue is the key path to strengthening our comprehensive security and safeguarding peace and stability in the OSCE region. The OSCE is the appropriate forum to address any security concern by any participating State. The EU will contribute actively and constructively to this process and we call on other participating States to do the same.
2. In order for this dialogue to be meaningful, the current climate of threats and escalating rhetoric must be reversed. We should all uphold our commitment to the core principles that underpin European security by respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every State, acknowledging the inherent right of every State to decide their foreign policy and to choose their own security arrangements and refraining from the threat or use of force. These principles are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or re-interpretation.
3. We condemn Russia’s continued aggressive actions and threats against Ukraine and its military build-up near the border with Ukraine, its deployment of combat forces in, and joint drills with, Belarus as well as its increased military presence and naval exercises in the Black Sea and in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We call on Russia to immediately de-escalate, to abide by international law and to engage constructively in dialogue through the established international mechanisms. Together with our transatlantic and like-minded partners, we reiterate that any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs. This includes a wide array of sectoral, financial and individual restrictive measures.

4. The EU is deeply concerned regarding the restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement. Again last Thursday, an SMM patrol was prevented from crossing the contact line at the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge by the Russia-backed armed formations. We regret the negative impact such restrictions have on the Mission's movements and logistical operations. We urge the Russian Federation to respect the SMM's mandate and ensure that all restrictions affecting the SMM's work are lifted immediately.
5. The EU deeply regrets Russia's de-facto integration efforts in the non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. Such efforts include the recent Presidential decree to allow Russian passport holders in the NGCAs to receive social security payments through the Russian state services portal. We also deeply regret the accelerated issuing of Russian passports on a massive scale to Ukrainian citizens in a simplified and selective manner in both the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula as well as in areas temporarily held by the Russia-backed armed formations. In addition, Russia's decision to involve residents of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, temporarily outside government control, in the elections to the Russian Federation State Duma on 17-19 September 2021, is yet another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. We urge Russia to reverse this creeping de-facto annexation of Ukrainian territory and to fully implement the Minsk agreements in good faith.
6. The EU condemns the ongoing human rights and fundamental freedoms abuses in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We deplore that the pre-trial detention of Ruslan Suleymanov, Rustem Sheykhaliev, Enver Ametov, Yashar Muedinov and Osman Arifmemetov was extended until 20 March. We call on the Russian authorities to release all arbitrarily detained political prisoners, comply with international law and end all human rights violations and abuses in the illegally annexed peninsula.
7. 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.

8. 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\*, 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.