



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1340 Vienna, 21 October 2021

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

1. The European Union condemns the recent actions against the Special Monitoring Mission. We are appalled by the severe restrictions placed on the SMM’s freedom of movement by the Russia-backed armed formations, including preventing SMM monitors from leaving its premises in the non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk region. These restrictions are completely unacceptable as the safety and security of the SMM monitors are of utmost priority and should not be compromised. The SMM must be given safe and unhindered access throughout the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions temporarily outside government control, in order to implement its mandate. This was an important provision of both the Minsk agreements and the conclusions of the Normandy Summit in Paris in December 2019, to which also Russia is a signatory. We urge Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to ensure that all restrictions to the SMM’s freedom of movement are lifted immediately.
2. Madam Chair, the EU’s unwavering support to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, our continued non-recognition policy of the illegal annexation of Crimea and our firm support for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements were again reaffirmed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Charles Michel and High Representative Josep Borrell during the 23rd EU-Ukraine Summit held in Kyiv on 12 October. The Summit also reaffirmed our continued commitment to strengthen the political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the European Union.

3. The EU condemns the decision of the Russian Federation to conduct a population census in the illegally annexed Ukrainian territory of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol from 15 October until 14 November, and the launching of yet another conscription campaign on 1 October. We call on Russia to stop all violations of international law and international humanitarian law. The European Union will continue to work for a peaceful end of Russia's illegal annexation of the peninsula, as reiterated at the first summit of the International Crimean Platform on 23 August.
4. We fully support the efforts of the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group in working towards a sustainable political solution to the conflict. The CiO Special Representative Mikko Kinnunen and all the working group coordinators have our full support in their important task of facilitating the implementation of the Minsk agreements. In this context, Russia's attempts to advance a distorted narrative on its role in the conflict are an obstruction to the negotiations. The Minsk agreements are unambiguous in stating that the TCG consists of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE, the latter as the mediator. We call on Russia to assume its responsibility as a party to the conflict by engaging constructively in the TCG and the Normandy format as well as to implement the Minsk Agreements in full.
5. The EU condemns the ongoing abuses of human rights and fundamental freedom in illegally annexed Crimea by the Russian Federation. We condemn the recent mass detentions of Crimean Tatars based on fabricated charges and the reported use of punitive psychiatry against their imprisoned leader Nariman Dzhelyal. We call for the immediate release of all those detained and sentenced in breach of international law, including Nariman Dzhelyal, Oleh Prykhodko, Halyna Dovahopola and other Ukrainian citizens who are persecuted for voicing dissent and openly opposing Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. We urge Russia to comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law and other applicable international law. We call on Russia to bring an immediate end to all violations and abuses of human rights of residents of Crimea and to provide full and unimpeded access for established regional and international monitoring mechanisms, including the SMM, as provided for in its mandate.

6. 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.

7. 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.