



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°980 Vienna, 23 June 2021

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chair, the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship has put conflict resolution within the OSCE, which is also a top priority for the European Union, at the centre of this month's discussions in our organisation. We look forward to the regular exchanges in the ASRC on the security challenges, including conflicts. We appreciate that Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde visited Ukraine for the second time this year which underscores the Chair's priority of the peaceful resolution of this conflict.

Our position on Russia's acts of aggression and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol is well-known. We reaffirm our conviction that the OSCE offers participating States an indispensable platform for dialogue on this and other conflicts in the OSCE area. We will therefore continue to draw attention to this blatant breach of international law and of the OSCE principles and commitments which are fundamental to the European security order as long as the situation is not reversed. This chapter is not yet closed, contrary to some sporadic statements by Russia we are hearing here in different OSCE fora.

Consequently, we reject the Russian narrative of portraying itself as a mediator in an "internal Ukrainian conflict", thus obstructing meaningful discussions in the TCG as well as in the Normandy format. Finding a sustainable solution to the conflict requires frank and honest discussion on its nature, as well as political will to implement the respective commitments. We therefore urge Russia, as a party to the conflict, to take

responsibility for its actions and to engage in the discussions on the implementation of the Minsk agreements in good faith.

We also underline the importance of military transparency in relations between the participating States. The disregard of commitments under the Vienna Document, as displayed by Russia during and in the wake of its recent military build-up, is not conducive to rebuilding trust and confidence. On this issue, we will speak more in the Security Dialogue later today.

The general security situation in the conflict zone remains volatile [despite the latest decrease in ceasefire violations]. We regret the growing number of civilian casualties and casualties reported among the Ukrainian military personnel. Since the beginning of the year, the SMM has confirmed 37 civilian casualties, out of which 27 were due to mines. Once again, whilst facilitating operation of the Donetsk Filtration Station, the SMM has recorded explosions within a 5km radius of the station and heavy-machine-gun fire when a bus with DFS workers was driving by. These specific violent acts threaten the provision of clean water to more than 380,000 civilians and deepen the humanitarian crisis. We repeat that ceasefire can best be preserved if both sides implement their commitments made in the TCG and adhere to the additional measures agreed in July 2020. We therefore deplore any military provocations and commend Ukraine for its restraint.

The SMM is being denied access on an almost daily basis in the areas under effective control of the Russia-backed armed formations and its UAVs are constantly subjected to jamming. We echo the clear words by CiO Ann Linde during her visit in Ukraine that this continuous erosion of the already limited monitoring ability of the SMM is unacceptable and runs contrary to the SMM mandate which provides for the Mission's safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine. 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.

In conclusion, we remain firm in our 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. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone. We call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the armed formations. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn. All foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential.

We recall our unwavering support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to recognise 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. We continue to call on Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov in accordance with international law. We express our deep concern about Russia's actions to block access to parts of the Black Sea, including near illegally-annexed Crimea and the Kerch Strait, and about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia which continues to impact the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond.

Mr. Chair, I kindly request that this statement be joined to the Journal of the Day.

The Candidate Countries 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, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.