



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1320 Vienna, 17 June 2021

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

Madam Chair, we appreciate that Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde this week visited Ukraine for the second time this year. It shows that the Chairpersonship is keeping the peaceful resolution of this conflict at the top of the OSCE agenda. Moreover, the recent decrease in ceasefire violations is an encouraging development, although it is regrettable that the general security situation remains volatile. We are particularly worried about the worsening security situation around the disengagement areas, as the SMM reports regular ceasefire violations in and around the Petrivske and Zolote disengagement areas. We are also concerned about the growing number of civilian casualties, as the SMM has confirmed another three civilians injured by explosive devices, and damages to civilian infrastructure, including a functional school. We repeat that ceasefire can only 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.

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 is unambiguous in stating that the TCG consists of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE, the latter as a mediator. Russia has therefore clearly and legally accepted its responsibility for 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. 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 regret that Russia is still not engaging meaningfully in the discussions under the Vienna Document regarding their unusual military build-up close to its border with Ukraine and in the illegally annexed Crimea. It is worrying to hear reports indicating that a large part of the Russian troops and equipment seem to remain in the area, despite the Russia’s previous announcement to withdraw its troops. We once again urge Russia to meet its commitments under the Vienna Document and to provide more transparency on the remaining forces and equipment as well as the process of their planned withdrawal.

The unprecedented restrictions that the SMM is facing on its freedom of movement is also deeply worrying as it affects 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. 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.

We deplore the issuing of Russian passports on a massive scale to Ukrainian citizens in a simplified and selective manner. We are also concerned that children are now required by the Russia-backed armed formations to show a passport, instead of only a birth certificate, when crossing the line of contact. These measures violate the sovereignty of Ukraine, contradict the objectives of the Minsk Agreements and impede a future reintegration process.

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.

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.