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**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1351  
Vienna, 20 January 2022**

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

1. The European Union deeply regrets the actions of the Russian Federation, which contribute to an escalation of tensions with regard to Ukraine. This represents a direct threat to our European security. Unacceptable demands put forward by Russia are accompanied by heightened rhetoric by its senior officials and by threatening military build-up, movements and exercises near the border with Ukraine as well as in the illegally annexed Crimea. Lately, there are also highly worrying reports about the deployment of Russian troops to Belarus, including near its border with Ukraine. The European Council was crystal clear in its conclusions from 16 December 2021: any further military aggression against Ukraine will have massive consequences and a severe cost for Russia, including restrictive measures coordinated with our partners. Against this background, the EU urges Russia to de-escalate tensions. Credible diplomatic engagement is the only viable and sustainable path towards de-escalation. Such efforts should be made in good faith and not be conducted in a climate of escalating rhetoric and ultimatums.
2. The EU fully supports the conflict resolution efforts in the framework of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. We are pleased that ceasefire violations have decreased since the agreement in the TCG on 22 December 2021. However, we are concerned by the lack of full adherence to the ceasefire measures and the continued presence of Minsk-proscribed weapons along the contact line.

3. Our unwavering support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders remains steadfast. This was the message that the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell reaffirmed during his visit to Ukraine in the first week of 2022 where he, together with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, visited the Stanytsya Luhanska entry-exit check point at the contact line. We recall the right of every sovereign State to decide its foreign policy and to choose its own security arrangements, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris. Let us be clear: there cannot be a decision on the security in Europe without all the European states at the table and there cannot be any international discussion on Ukrainian security without Ukraine.
4. The European Union strongly condemns the cyberattack against Ukraine on 14 January. Such actions aim at destabilizing Ukraine, spread disinformation and could contribute to further escalation of the already tense situation. The EU and its Member States stand ready to provide additional technical assistance to Ukraine to remediate this attack and further support Ukraine against any destabilizing actions, including by further building up its resilience against hybrid and cyber threats. In general, the EU has provided Ukraine with over €17 billion in political, financial and economic support since the beginning of the conflict in 2014.
5. The SMM is mandated to gather information and report on the situation in Ukraine under the principles of impartiality and transparency with safe and secure access throughout Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. The EU fully supports the SMM and commends the Mission for its dedicated and fruitful work under these principles. We are deeply concerned by Russia's continued actions to minimize the presence of the SMM in the non-government controlled areas of Ukraine and its attempts to influence its operations. Recurrent hostile rhetoric against the SMM, interference with its technical assets as well as the unprecedented restrictions to its freedom of movement by the Russia-backed armed formations, are unacceptable. The European Union condemns these obstructions to the SMM's work. We urge the Russian Federation to respect the mandate given to the SMM and ensure that all restrictions affecting the SMM's work are lifted immediately.

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 REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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