

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

FSC.DEL/387/21
21 October 2021

ENGLISH only



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°989
Vienna, 20 October 2021**

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chair, the 23rd EU-Ukraine Summit held last week in Kyiv reaffirmed our continued commitment to strengthening the political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the European Union and our unwavering support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. As stated by the President of the European Council Charles Michel in Kyiv, the EU will continue to support all efforts in international and multinational frameworks aimed at preserving a rules-based global order. That is why the EU and its Member States welcomed and participated at the launching event of the International Crimea Platform, held on the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's independence.

The European Union and its Member States remain seriously concerned by the volatile security situation in the conflict zone. The statement of Ambassador Mikko Kinnunen after last week's meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group was quite telling. He considered the security situation "close to unstable" and did not hide his disappointment that the participants had not achieved a common standpoint on the reduction of the violence along the contact line. We fully support Ambassador Kinnunen's appeal to avoid escalations and reiterate that the ceasefire can be best preserved if commitments made in the TCG, including the additional measures agreed in July 2020, are adhered to by both sides.

We underline the importance of international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group, which are aimed at reaching a political solution to the conflict in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We call on both sides to implement the Minsk

agreements in their entirety and underscore Russia's responsibility, as a party to the conflict, in this regard. We urge both sides to also implement the commitments undertaken at the Normandy Summit on 9 December 2019, in good faith. We commend Ukraine for its constructive approach in this regard and look forward, despite some recent discouraging rhetoric, to a change of course on the other side.

We reiterate our full support to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. The Mission must have full freedom of movement within the entire territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and along the whole Ukraine-Russia State border. We strongly deplore the unprecedented and unacceptable restrictions placed on the freedom of movement of monitors by Russia backed armed formations and call for an immediate lifting of all restrictions to allow SMM to resume its activities in accordance with its mandate. All impediments to the SMM's work, including attempts to obstruct and destroy SMM's assets, are unacceptable. Safety and security of the SMM staff must be ensured. We urge Russia to use its considerable and undeniable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to remove all restrictions on the SMM and the use of its assets.

The much needed transparency along the uncontrolled segment of the Ukraine-Russia State border remains in short supply, even more so after the regrettable decision by the Russian Federation not to extend the Border Observer Mission. On 14 October, another so-called "humanitarian convoy" crossed from Russia into Ukraine, without the consent of the latter, in a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We once again call on Russia to join an international mechanism for the delivery of humanitarian aid and to desist from its current practice, which is incompatible with basic principles of international law.

Mr Chair, several EU Member States and other participating States conduct military cooperation with Ukraine in order to support its resilience in face of the obvious challenges to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We recall the long-established principle, in international law and also the OSCE acquis, that all States have the inherent right to freely choose the course of their foreign and security policy. Political and security cooperation between sovereign States or international organisations is a

normal practice, in particular when it is conducted in a transparent way and with the consent of all States involved.

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 to 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 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.

The Candidate Countries the 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, 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.