



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1466 Vienna, 21 March 2024**

#### **EU statement on the Russian presidential elections and Russia's violations of OSCE principles and commitments**

1. The presidential elections held by Russia on 15-17 March took place in a highly restricted environment exacerbated also by Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.
2. Russian authorities have continued to increase the systematic internal repression by cracking down on opposition politicians, civil society organisations, independent media and other critical voices with the use of repressive legislation and politically motivated prison sentences. The shocking death of opposition politician Alexei Navalny in the run-up to the elections is yet another sign of the accelerating and systematic repression. The elections took place in an ever-shrinking political space, which has resulted in an alarming increase of violations of civil and political rights, and precluded many candidates from running, including all those opposed to Russia's illegal war of aggression, deprived Russian voters of a real choice and heavily limited their access to accurate information. The European Union will continue to support the important work of Russian civil society organisations, human rights defenders and independent media.
3. The European Union regrets the decision of Russian authorities not to invite OSCE/ODIHR observers to its elections. This runs contrary to Russia's OSCE commitments and has denied Russia's voters and institutions an impartial and independent assessment of these elections.
4. Furthermore, the European Union strongly condemns the illegal holding of so-called "elections" in the territories of Ukraine that Russia has temporarily occupied: Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, as well as in parts of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. The so-called "elections" in

these territories represent yet another manifest violation by Russia of international law, including the UN Charter, and of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Referring to the two UNGA Resolutions of 12 October 2022 and 27 March 2014, we urge Russia to respect Ukraine's internationally recognised borders and sovereignty. The European Union reiterates that it does not and will never recognise either the holding of these so-called "elections" in the territories of Ukraine or their results. They are null and void and cannot produce any legal effect whatsoever. Russia's political leadership and those involved in organising them will face consequences of these illegal actions.

5. The European Union reiterates its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. Russia must cease its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its military forces and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine, enabled by the Lukashenka regime, serves as a stark reminder that internal repression and external aggression go hand in hand. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a prerequisite for lasting security and peace among and within states.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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