



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1019 Vienna, 27 July 2022

EU Statement

1. Mr. Chair, at the first session under the Belarusian FSC Chairpersonship on 4 May, we expressed our deep concern about the current security situation in Europe and **our strongest condemnation of the war of aggression** launched by the Russian Federation, supported by the Lukashenka regime, against its peaceful neighbour Ukraine. Today, three months later, the situation has only changed for worse.
2. The European Union and its Member States will not tire of repeating that **Russia's deliberate, long planned and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine constitutes a blatant violation of international law and all fundamental principles of international relations. Nothing can justify this aggression.** Targeting and killing thousands of people, including innocent civilians, notably women and children, attempting to redraw borders by force and to subjugate the will of a free people is not and will never become acceptable in the 21st century.
3. Russia's aggression is an unspeakable tragedy for Ukraine and its people. At the same time, it is also an **acute threat to international security and an unprecedented challenge for the international community.** One of the basic principles of the rules-based international order, a term often questioned by Russian officials, is that of territorial integrity of sovereign states. **Borders cannot be changed by force.** The overwhelming majority of states, whether North, West, South or East of Vienna, continue to cherish and uphold this important and fundamental principle. So, when Russia decides that it does not follow the rules agreed by all states, including by Russia itself, the whole world, everybody, becomes less safe and secure.

4. This war is also **a strategic mistake for Russia**. The severe costs for Russia which it has imposed on itself by waging this brutal war cannot be denied – political, economic and reputational damage as well as a devastating human toll are the result of Russia's actions. We, and our partners warned Russia of such consequences, but the Kremlin ignored our calls and OSCE tools for de-escalation because it had already chosen the path of force and violence. This irrational decision shows how dangerous it is to turn one's back on fundamental democratic principles and on an effective system of checks and balances. Moreover, it also shows the importance and relevance of the OSCE's fundamental concept of comprehensive security and how internal repression creates grounds for external aggression.
5. We will also keep holding the Belarusian regime accountable for providing its territory, airspace and logistical infrastructure, in the unjustified attack on its peaceful neighbour. Belarus' actions that also continued throughout the Belarusian FSC Chairpersonship violate the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act as well as norms, principles and obligations under international treaties and mechanisms.
6. Mr. Chair, in a situation where **peace can no longer be taken for granted and the security and stability of Europe is profoundly and durably shaken by a brutal war of aggression**, we are reminded of the **need to stand up to restore and defend peace, human dignity and universal values**. Hence we will continue to support the Ukrainian government and all Ukrainians in their heroic and impressive defence of their homeland and in their right **to choose their own future**. We will also continue to impose severe costs on the aggressor and its accomplice.
7. The mandate of the Forum for Security Cooperation is to **discuss the security needs and concerns** of all participating States, to **cooperate towards peace in our region**, through **increased military transparency and predictability** and **building mutual trust**. Russia has trampled on this mandate with its brutal war of aggression and has completely undermined the credibility and effectiveness of this Forum. Since 24 February, **business as usual** is no longer possible. Limiting the FSC meetings to general statements was unavoidable in these circumstances.

8. We look forward to the upcoming **Belgian FSC Chairpersonship** and working with Ambassador Nagant de Deuxchaisnes and his able team. We assure our Belgian colleagues of our full support and engagement, and hope that it will be possible to work towards restoring the minimum of trust on which fruitful work in our Forum could be based.

9. Mr. Chair, Russia has to stop the war. We, therefore, reiterate our demand **that Russia immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions** and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. **We also reiterate our firm call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression** and to abide by its international obligations. We will continue to firmly stand by Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in their defence of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Thank you.