



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1257 Vienna, 30 January 2020**

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

1. Mr. Chairperson, the European Union supports Ukraine in ensuring a prosperous future for its citizens. An independent, stable and democratic State of Ukraine, based on the rule of law and functioning market economy, is our shared objective. Achieving it will also help restore the full sovereignty of Ukraine that has been challenged by the acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014. The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, is the main tool for bringing Ukraine and the EU closer together, promoting deeper political ties, strengthening economic links and ensuring respect for, and promotion of, our common values. This approach was reaffirmed two days ago in Brussels at the 6th meeting of the Association Council chaired jointly by the Ukrainian Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell.
2. The European Union fully supports the continued international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group with the view of helping to end the conflict which to date has cost more than 13.000 lives. We urge both sides to implement the commitments of the Minsk Agreements, including those undertaken by them at the Normandy Four Summit on 9 December, in good faith. In this context, we commend the Ukrainian leadership

for their constructive approach and the political will to negotiate an end to the conflict and call on Russia to act likewise.

3. Regrettably, the security situation is again becoming highly volatile. Almost every day, the SMM reports casualties among the civilian population and the Ukrainian military personnel, which we deeply regret. The sharp increase in the fatalities among the military personnel is mostly due to heavy shelling with the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements. In this context, we reiterate the urgency of a full, unlimited and comprehensive ceasefire which should have been in place by the end of last year in accordance with a clear commitment of the leaders of the Normandy Format. We also recognise the work that remains to be done in the de-mining process to the benefit of the population. In this context, we recall the announcement at the N4 Summit in December on the development and implementation of an updated de-mining plan with new priority areas. We also look forward to the designation of the three new disengagement areas and commend the SMM for its role and professionalism in monitoring the disengagement process. We note with concern the ongoing shelling and fighting within the zone of Petrivske, as reported by the SMM in their weekly report 4/2020. Such acts must stop and the agreements on disengagement reached within the TCG must be fully respected.
4. The mutual release of detainees that took place on 29 December 2019 was a welcome step in the right direction. However, we are concerned that, despite previous agreements, the International Committee of the Red Cross has still been denied full and unconditional access to the detainees in the non-government controlled areas. We call for the ICRC to receive full, safe and unimpeded access to prisoners throughout Ukraine.

5. We reiterate the call made in the N4 for safe and secure access of the SMM throughout Ukraine, with a view to the implementation of its mandate to the full extent. The safety and security of the SMM is of primary importance. We recall our position that any impediments to the SMM's work, including attempts to destroy SMM's assets, are unacceptable. We deplore targeting of SMM assets, including SMM UAVs by means of signal interference and small arms fire, occurring almost on a daily basis in non-government controlled areas. Those responsible for any wilful damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs and other assets should be held accountable, both politically and financially.
6. We note that Russia claims to have granted citizenship to a very significant number of inhabitants of Donbas during 2019 and recall that this simplified procedure constitutes an attack on the sovereignty of Ukraine and runs counter to the spirit and objectives of the Minsk agreements. The European Union recalls its guidance that it has issued on territorial competence and non-recognition of passports as a consequence of the Russian presidential decree of 24 April 2019 and calls on other OSCE participating States not to recognize these passports.
7. This week the Council of the European Union added seven persons to the list of those subject to restrictive measures as a response to the so called "local elections" organised by the Russian Federation in the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol in Ukraine on 8 September 2019 in order to ensure the individual responsibility for those involved. As we do not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, we do not recognize the holding of these so called "elections", nor their "results".
8. We call on Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov in accordance with international law.

9. 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 economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.
10. 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 the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, align themselves with this statement.

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

