



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No.1442 Vienna, 21 September 2023

Russia's detention of OSCE officials as part of its war of aggression against Ukraine (Current issue to be raised by the US)

1. We would like to thank the US delegation for raising the issue of Russia's continuous illegal detention of three OSCE SMM staff members, Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov. We echo the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and the OSCE Secretary General in their firm condemnation of the continuous suffering endured by them, as well as their families and loved ones, and their calls for the immediate release of those detained.
2. The three OSCE SMM officials have been unjustly and illegally detained by Russia for more than 500 days already. They were working under a consensual mandate, undeniably supported also by Russia. We deplore that they are unjustifiably held in conditions unknown to their families, condemn the so-called "legal" proceedings initiated against them and recall that they still enjoy their functional legal protection as OSCE staff.
3. Therefore, we strongly reiterate our call on Russia to assume its responsibility as an OSCE participating State and to immediately and unconditionally release all OSCE SMM staff members. Russia must also immediately return the stolen OSCE SMM vehicles to their legitimate owners – all OSCE participating States.
4. Russia's stance is yet another example of its blatant disrespect for its commitments as a participating state, as well as for the principles and values the OSCE stands for.

5. On a broader note, we also demand the immediate release of all those who, as part of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, have been arbitrarily or illegally detained by Russia or forcibly transferred to Ukrainian territory, temporarily and illegally occupied by Russia, or deported to Russia and/or Belarus, including children. Russia must ensure that all Ukrainians in Russian captivity are treated in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
6. We request that the Secretary General and other OSCE structures and institutions keep us informed about the situation.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO 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.