



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference

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Special Session

”Security situation in the OSCE area”

**Statement delivered by EEAS Managing Director for Russia, Eastern partnership, Central Asia, Regional cooperation and OSCE
Mr. Michael Siebert**

1. The European Union thanks the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Minister Rau, his team and the OSCE Secretariat for organising this year's Annual Security Review Conference, in such challenging circumstances.
2. This unique and special session on the “*Security situation in the OSCE area*” is regrettably relevant and timely. A year ago, we deplored that the spirit and the letter of the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris were being “seriously challenged”. This year, such words would appear as a strong understatement.
3. With its premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and illegal attack of Ukraine, Russia deliberately chose to aggress its neighbour, a sovereign state, and to violate its key commitments under the UN Charter and the OSCE framework.
4. The Russian missile strike on a shopping centre in the Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk yesterday was yet another heinous act in a series of countless attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure by the Russian Armed Forces. This includes most recently missile attacks on civilian buildings and infrastructure in Kyiv and other regions.

5. The European Union will continue to condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We repeat our many calls on Russia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Russia must 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 call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations. We will never recognise any illegal entities nor annexation of Ukraine's territory.
6. At the European Council last week, we reiterated that we firmly stand with Ukraine and that the European Union will continue to provide strong support for Ukraine's overall political, economic, military, social and financial resilience, including humanitarian aid.
7. Mr. Chair, the use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the 21st century. So, when Russia decides unilaterally that it will not follow the rules agreed by all OSCE participating States, including by Russia itself, the whole world, everybody, becomes less safe and secure. As well, Russia bears sole responsibility for the global food security crisis it has provoked by weaponising food in its war against Ukraine
8. We reiterate our conviction that tensions and conflicts should be resolved exclusively through dialogue and diplomacy, which is what the OSCE stands for.
9. This is also relevant for protracted conflicts in the region. In and around Nagorno-Karabakh, we welcome the cessation of hostilities in November 2020, as well as the steps forward taken recently in the trilateral meetings between the President of the European Council Charles Michel, President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia. The European Union will continue to cooperate closely in its efforts with the OSCE.
10. We will also continue to work together with the OSCE towards peaceful conflict resolution in Georgia, including through the Geneva international discussions. We will support continued OSCE efforts to promote a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, and we welcome in particular the adoption

of the Ministerial Statement on the negotiations on the Transnistrian settlement process in the “5+2” format in Stockholm last year.

11. In Central Asia, the aftermath of the situation in Afghanistan continues to be felt and to impact on all of us. The EU also calls for a peaceful settlement of border issues within the region and for progress in regional cooperation on cross-border water management. The EU is supporting the OSCE politically and practically to address these challenges.
12. In the Western Balkans, EU integration and the clear European perspective are strong tools for pushing forward positive change, in line with our shared interests and values, from security and stability to economy, green transition and efforts to combat climate change.
13. It is also in that spirit of peace and prosperity of the continent that the European Council recognised last week the European perspective of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, and decided to grant the status of candidate country to Ukraine and to the Republic of Moldova. These three countries belong to the European family.
14. In conclusion, the EU is confident that the OSCE, in its comprehensive approach to security, remains the key platform to address our common security challenges across all three dimensions. This is the case with regard to specific conflicts in the OSCE region, but also emerging and transnational threats that have an impact on all of us. What was valid almost 50 years ago still holds today: the European security order can be defended only by respecting international law and the OSCE principles and commitments. Thank you.