



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1355 Vienna, 17 February 2022

EU Statement in response to the update by the Special Representative of the CiO in Ukraine and in the TCG, Ambassador Mikko Kinnunen, and to the Report by the SMM Chief Monitor, Ambassador Yaşar Halit Çevik

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Mikko Kinnunen and Ambassador Yaşar Halit Çevik to the Permanent Council.
2. We are following very closely and with grave concern the worsening security situation with regard to Ukraine. We condemn Russia's aggressive and threatening actions and its unprecedented and large-scale military build-up near the border with Ukraine, including through the deployment of combat forces in, and the joint drills with, Belarus. In addition, Russia's increased military presence in the Black Sea and in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula, as well as the closure of large parts of the Black Sea, add to the threat of escalation also in the maritime sphere and pose a socio-economic risk to Ukraine's Black Sea ports.
3. We call on Russia to immediately de-escalate, to abide by international law and to engage constructively in dialogue through the established international mechanisms. Together with our transatlantic and like-minded partners, we reiterate that any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine would have massive consequences and severe costs. This includes a wide array of sectoral, financial and individual restrictive measures.
4. We deplore the Russian State Duma's call to President Putin to recognize the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine as independent entities. Such a recognition would be condemnable and a clear violation of the Minsk

agreements and of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It would also seriously undermine the work of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group in finding a peaceful settlement to this conflict.

5. It is at times like this that your work, Ambassadors Kinnunen and Çevik, is of even greater importance. You and all other coordinators of the TCG working groups, as well as the colleagues in the Normandy format, are to the forefront of diplomatic efforts to find a sustainable and peaceful resolution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine in line with the Minsk agreements. We assure you of our full support.
6. The EU would like to reiterate that the Minsk agreements, signed by the Russian Federation, are unambiguous in stating that the TCG consists of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE. Russia has therefore clearly accepted its responsibility in working to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict. We urge Russia, as a party to the conflict, to engage constructively in the TCG discussions and to implement the Minsk agreements in full.
7. We thank Ambassador Çevik for his report. We highly appreciate, and consider it of vital importance, that the Mission continues to carry out its important mandate without interruption despite the difficult situation. You are our eyes and ears on the ground providing us with impartial and reliable information. We encourage the SMM to continue its contingency planning and do everything possible to ensure the safety and security of all its members. In addition, we stand ready to support the Mission in this effort, including by looking into opportunities for potential additional contributions to the SMM.
8. We regret the deterioration of the security situation including the high numbers of ceasefire violations between October and December 2021 and a doubling in the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. There was unfortunately a significant increase of civilian casualties due to shelling and small-arms fire as well as damage to civilian infrastructure between September and November 2021.
9. We also deeply regret the chronic restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement, predominantly in the non-government controlled areas, which makes monitoring of these areas more difficult and also lead to the temporary suspension of monitoring in the NGCAs in September as well as the sharply constrained functioning of the vehicular

crossing routes in the non-government controlled areas of the Luhansk region of Ukraine. We cannot but deplore the fact that the closure of all but two entry- and exit crossing points by the Russia-backed armed formations has led to a 95% decrease in civilian crossings with all the consequences it implies for ordinary life.

10. We welcome the SMM's strong focus on gender equality and the women, peace and security agenda throughout its work and emphasise once again the importance of the human dimension in SMM activities and reporting.
11. 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 the 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 sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.
12. 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* ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European

Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC of MOLDOVA and GEORGIA, align themselves with this statement.

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