



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Annual Security Review Conference Vienna 23 June 2020**

#### **Special Session: Ensuring security and stability in the OSCE region in the light of developments with respect to Ukraine**

The European Union thanks the Albanian Chairmanship-in-Office for starting the Annual Security Review Conference 2020 with this special session and thanks the speakers for their presentations. Unfortunately, it is already the seventh consecutive ASRC that has a special session with the same title, the session devoted to the most serious challenge to the European security order in the history of the OSCE. More than six years ago the Russian Federation illegally annexed the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol and began acts of aggression in eastern Ukraine in blatant violation of international law and core OSCE principles and commitments. We urge Russia to uphold these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to resolve the conflict and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We again call on Russia to stop fuelling the conflict by providing financial and military support to the armed formations.

The fighting has already left more than 13.300 dead and around 30.000 injured, an estimated 1.4 million civilians have been forced from their homes. The human rights situation in non-government-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine and on the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula has deteriorated. To overcome these challenges, unconditional respect for OSCE principles must be restored and the Russian Federation must reverse acts that contravene these fundamental OSCE principles and international law. The European Union will remain committed to working towards this goal, including through restrictive measures.

We fully support efforts of the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group in working towards a sustainable political solution to the conflict in full respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. The Normandy Four Summit in Paris last December offered a glimmer of hope in this respect. However, the security situation in the conflict zone, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, remains highly volatile, leading to further casualties among the civilian population and the Ukrainian military personnel. The spike in civilian casualties last month was particularly worrisome. We reiterate our call for a comprehensive ceasefire, which is one of the key elements of the Normandy Four commitments and of the Minsk agreements. We commend the Ukrainian leadership for their consistent constructive approach and the political will to negotiate an end to the conflict and call on Russia to act likewise, including within the Trilateral Contact Group.

We commend the invaluable work of the women and men of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission that have continued with their monitoring activities despite the pandemic. We reiterate our position that the SMM must be ensured safe, secure and unimpeded access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian- Russian state border and to the illegally annexed Crimea. We condemn the restrictions of movement the SMM is facing in non-government-controlled areas, including those recently imposed under the pretext of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such restrictions constitute an impediment to the implementation of the SMM mandate and seriously threaten the effective functioning of the Mission as it was reiterated on many occasions by Chief Monitor Amb. Cevik. The safety of the monitors remains a top priority for us. We are deeply concerned about the many recent incidents that have posed a direct threat to the lives and health of the monitors. We urge Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to meet the Minsk commitments in full and to allow the SMM to fulfil its mandate. The EU also deplores any impediments to the SMM's monitoring activity, including targeting and jamming of the SMM's technical assets, destruction of cameras and restrictions on the SMM's freedom of movement, which occur predominantly in areas controlled by Russia-backed armed formations. The EU continues to support the SMM politically, and by providing together with its Member States two thirds of both the mission's budget and monitors.

The EU deplors the particularly grave situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the non-government-controlled areas in Donbas and in the illegally annexed Crimea. Over the past six years, residents of the peninsula, and in particular the Crimean Tartars, have been facing systematic restrictions of the human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, religion or belief. We continue to urge the Russian Federation to ensure unimpeded access to international human rights monitoring missions and human rights non-governmental organisations to Crimea. We strongly condemn the conscription campaigns of the residents of Crimea to the Russian army, which violate international humanitarian law. Moreover, Russia's decree adding most of Crimea and Sevastopol to the list of border territories of the Russian Federation in which non-Russian citizens are prevented from owning land is yet another attempt to forcibly integrate the illegally-annexed peninsula into Russia and to impose Russian citizenship in the peninsula.

We reiterate our utmost concern about the Russian presidential decree of April 2019 granting citizenship to inhabitants of the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in a simplified procedure. We recall the EU guidance on territorial competence and non-recognition of passports issued on the basis of this decree and call on other participating States not to recognize them either. We also recall our non-recognition policy for Russian passports issued in the illegally annexed Crimea.

The European Union has been consistent in expressing its deep concern about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, which impacts the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond. The building of the Kerch strait bridge without Ukraine's consent and the arbitrary inspection regime at the Kerch Strait limit the navigation to and from Ukrainian ports, with negative economic consequences for Ukraine's ports in the Azov Sea and for the whole region. We recall the UN General Assembly Resolutions 73/194 and 74/17 and call on Russia to implement their provisions without further delay.

We are convinced that the conflict can only be solved by diplomatic means in full respect for international law and principles. The EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in order to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. The EU reaffirms its resolute support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders. The EU does not recognize and continues to condemn the illegal annexation of the

Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, which is a violation of international law.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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