



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1042 Vienna, 26 April 2023

EU Opening Statement

1. The European Union and its Member States warmly congratulate Bulgaria on assuming the role of the Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation. We thank you, Ambassador Krалеva, for outlining your priorities for the upcoming trimester.
2. Madam Chair, as we gather here today, we cannot ignore the stark reality that the world we now live in is vastly different from the one that existed when this Forum was established more than 30 years ago. Back then, the peoples of Europe were united in their aspirations for peace and freedom, having thrown off the shackles of totalitarianism. However, today, the actions of one participating State, the Russian Federation, threaten to undo all the progress that has been made towards achieving lasting peace and security for the people in the OSCE region. This cannot be allowed.
3. Madam Chair, no one shall remain indifferent to the injustice and tragedy unfolding before our eyes in Ukraine. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's brutal unjustified, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and Russia's disregard for international law, including the UN Charter and fundamental OSCE principles. Likewise, we condemn the complicity of the Lukashenko regime, and call on Belarus to stop supporting and enabling Russia's war.
4. The mandate of the FSC is to cooperate towards peace and security in the OSCE region. We cherish this mandate and call on the Russian Federation to respect it as well so that the potential of this Forum can be used to make Europe and the OSCE area a more secure and peaceful region. To this end, full respect for the very foundation of security, such as territorial integrity and sovereignty of other participating States, must be re-established. For the time being, and as long as Russian forces attack Ukraine, razing Ukrainian cities, unleashing endless suffering on the Ukrainian people and committing unspeakable atrocities, this Forum must remain focused on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and

its devastating consequences. We will continue to stand firmly by Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in their self-defence to preserve their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will be doing so for as long as it takes.

5. We will also continue, in this Forum and elsewhere, to denounce Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine which constitute violations of international law. We will not spare any efforts in ensuring accountability for all those responsible for the crimes and atrocities committed in Ukraine. The recent decision by the International Criminal Court to issue arrest warrants was a crucial step in this direction.
6. While the end of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine shall remain our top priority, we must not lose sight of other ongoing conflicts in the OSCE area and relevant thematic issues.
7. We welcome the well-balanced programme outlined by the Chair, with discussions on important, timely and relevant topics for today's security situation largely aggravated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, whether humanitarian demining or implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda. An area that is directly affected by Russia's hostile and illegal actions against Ukraine is the security at and around the Black Sea. We look forward to the Security Dialogue next week on the topic. We also support the intention to organise in July a joint FSC-PC meeting dedicated to Environment and Security, to build on the work of the Belgian FSC Chair last year.
8. In conclusion, we would like to take this opportunity to assure you, Ambassador Krалева, of our full support and engagement in such a challenging period. We wish you and your able team every success.

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