



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1290 Vienna, 19 November 2020

EU Statement on “Russia’s Ongoing Aggression against Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea”

The European Union welcomes the tangible commitment by the sides to the additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire which were agreed in the Trilateral Contact Group in July. This has been the longest period of ceasefire since the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia in 2014 and the onset of acts of aggression by the Russia-backed armed formations in eastern Ukraine. We commend Ukraine for its restrained approach, despite a number of incidents which have led to casualties among its military personnel.

Nevertheless, we regret the ceasefire violations recorded by the SMM around the Donetsk Filtration Station, which account for 44% of all ceasefire violations recorded since July. This Filtration Station is of crucial importance as it supplies water to 380.000 inhabitants of both sides of the contact line. We call on the sides to protect critical civilian infrastructure.

We welcome Ukraine’s decision to re-open the entry exit check points in Stanytsa Luhanska and to open the new EECPs in Zolote and Schastia on 10 November, in line with the N4 commitments. The EU regrets the fact that the entry-exit check points near Zolote and Schastia are still not operational on the non-government controlled side. We call on the Russian Federation to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to ensure the opening of these new check points

as well as to open the remaining four closed check points in the Donetsk region to ease the lives of the conflict- and pandemic-hit local population.

As there are only a few scheduled meetings of the TCG left before the end of the year, we urge the sides to do their utmost in order to settle the many outstanding issues, such as agreeing on additional disengagement areas and an updated de-mining plan. We commend Ukraine for its demonstrated readiness on those issues and call on Russia to show a constructive approach in the discussions. We are convinced that if there is political will, then swift and substantial progress can be achieved.

We thank the SMM for its valuable reporting which shows us what is happening on the ground. For example, we note with concern that on 8 November, an SMM mini-UAV observed a UAV reconnaissance complex Navodchik-2 near Luhansk city in the non-government controlled area. This piece of modern military equipment, manufactured in Russia, is another example of Russian military support to the armed formations.

We also note that the SMM long-range UAVs continue to observe military-type trucks travelling on dirt roads in areas next to the border with Russia in non-government-controlled areas or crossing the border at night where there are no official border crossings. As the SMM reporting is vital for our understanding of the security situation, we repeat that any impediments to the work of the SMM, including attempts to destroy its assets such as UAVs, are unacceptable. We call on Russia to contribute to the removal of these impediments. We recall that the SMM must have access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including its international border.

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 fueling 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.

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* and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as 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.