



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference Vienna, 31 August 2021

EU Statement on Working Session II: Conflicts and crises in the OSCE area: building security and confidence

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1. The European Union thanks the Swedish Chair for your clear focus on conflict resolution during your Chairpersonship and also for including this session on the agenda of the Annual Security Review Conference. Our common principles and joint commitments, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, constitute the foundation of the European security order. Multilateralism and the respect for international law norms and principles, international humanitarian law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are cornerstones of the EU external policy and we believe that we should follow a comprehensive approach aimed at enhancing security for all states in the OSCE area, including regions affected by conflicts or protracted conflicts.
2. The unresolved conflicts in the OSCE region pose a severe challenge to the European security order. They also threaten the regional stability and hinder the development of our region's full potential. For example, the conflict in Ukraine, which is discussed in a separate session, has now lasted over seven years due to the continuing Russian acts of aggression.
3. The resolution of the existing conflicts in the OSCE area remains a priority for the EU and our positions on these conflicts are well known. The EU remains committed in its support to the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of all OSCE participating States. The EU supports the existing formats of negotiations and calls on all actors involved to enhance their commitment to conflict settlement. The OSCE provides a valuable platform for dialogue aimed at rebuilding trust and restoring security based on the full and unconditional respect for OSCE principles and commitments. The EU will continue to promote and

support confidence building measures to assist the resolution of these conflicts, in co-operation with the OSCE and other relevant interlocutors.

4. The EU has a high level of ambition regarding peace mediation as a key tool of conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding. This level of ambition is reflected in the Council Conclusions on EU Peace Mediation, which were adopted in December 2020. Gender mainstreaming and women's full, equal and meaningful access to, and participation and leadership in, conflict resolution processes are also a specific priority for the EU and we reiterate our commitment to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.
5. The European Union welcomes the ceasefire on the ground following the signature of the trilateral statement by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia on 9 November 2020. We support the call made by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group to resume the high level political dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan under their auspices as soon as possible. We also reaffirm our support for the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, Andrzej Kasprzyk.
6. The EU strongly encourages the Parties to jointly agree on the parameters for the long-term implementation of a set of stabilization, post-ceasefire rehabilitation and confidence-building measures. The EU reiterates that this is a humanitarian issue of the utmost importance. We hope that this important process will continue to its conclusion as soon as possible, in accordance with international humanitarian law and the obligations undertaken by the Parties. The European Union and other international actors have actively encouraged moves in this direction and we urge further cooperation between the countries involved. The EU remains fully committed to the efforts to achieve lasting peace within the OSCE Minsk process and to foster prosperous developments in the region. It stands ready to contribute to this, including through the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, Toivo Klaar, and in particular through support for confidence-building measures.
7. Madam Chair, the European Union recalls its support for a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Transnistrian conflict on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova, within its

internationally recognized borders, with a special status for Transnistria. We support the efforts of the OSCE Special Representative of the Chairmanship-in-Office to hold a meeting in a "5+2" format as we are convinced that this is the only mechanism to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict. We underline the need to continue the results-oriented approach towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict and to address all three baskets, including in the political, institutional and security aspects of the third basket. Such a meeting would also hopefully lead to concrete improvements in the living conditions of the local populations and to additional steps regarding the respect for human rights and freedom of movement. We would also like to see advancement on the implementation of the confidence-building measures approved in Berlin 2016 and in Vienna 2017, and then reaffirmed in Rome 2018.

8. We call for the withdrawal of the remaining forces of the Russian army from the Republic of Moldova in accordance with Russia's commitment made at the 1999 Istanbul Summit. We have taken note of the statements by the Russian Federation announcing its intention to destroy the ammunition from the depot in Cobasna. We recall that the OSCE has the mandate and means to contribute to the removal and destruction of the Russian munitions and armaments. Its involvement is essential for the transparency and international verification of these operations.
9. Madam Chair, the European Union reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders. We underline our deep concern about the Russian military presence in Georgia and the increased number of military exercises and infrastructure reinforcements as well as continuous illegal acts aimed at integrating the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into Russia's regulatory and security space. These steps run contrary to the principles of international law and commitments undertaken by Russia, including in the EU-mediated 2008 ceasefire agreement and its implementing measures. We recall the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights on 21 January 2021 concluding that Russia, by exercising effective control over Georgia's regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia after 12 August 2008, violated several provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. EU calls upon the Russian Federation to ensure proper follow-up of this ruling.

10. The European Union expresses its unwavering support to peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia, including by continuing its engagement as a co-chair in the Geneva International Discussions, the continued presence on the ground of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and its involvement in the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms. We recall that the EUMM, which is the only international presence on the ground, is mandated to access the whole territory of Georgia, including the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We call on the Russian Federation to remove any obstacles to the work of the EUMM and provide the EUMM access to all regions of Georgia. We call on Russia to withdraw its military forces from Georgia and to implement the EU-mediated ceasefire agreements and its implementing measures fully and without further delay.
11. In conclusion, let me reiterate the EU's support to all OSCE conflict resolution formats, the Swedish Chairpersonship, the OSCE Secretary-General and all our colleagues in the Secretariat and particularly to the field missions which every day work towards finding sustainable settlements of the conflicts in the OSCE region.

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 UKRAINE, 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.