



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1020
Vienna, 7 September 2022

EU Opening Statement

Mr. Chair, the European Union and its Member States **congratulate Belgium** on assuming the Chairpersonship of the Forum for Security Cooperation for the next four months. We thank you for outlining the Chair's perceptions on the current security situation in the OSCE area and its repercussions for our work in this forum.

We look forward to the upcoming meetings under the Belgian FSC Chairpersonship. We commend our Belgian colleagues for **the choice of the topics for the security dialogues** which are relevant both for the politico-military domain of the OSCE and the current context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine raging on our continent. We will continue to participate actively and constructively in these discussions.

Belgium takes over the baton of the FSC in midst of the most serious security crisis for Europe since the end of the World War II. In the coming days, we will reach **200 days of Russia's unprovoked, illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.** More than half a year of a futile attempt to subjugate its peaceful neighbour. Almost seven months of atrocities committed by Russian armed forces that continue to cause tremendous suffering to millions of people. Thousands of innocent civilians were killed, and prisoners of war are victims of abominable atrocities. Such crimes will not go unpunished. Mr. Chair, we will spare no efforts in **ensuring accountability** for all these acts. **We will not tire ourselves of reiterating our principled position on Russia' war of aggression** and refuting Russia's lies, propaganda and disinformation.

Use or the threat of use of force to change internationally recognised borders are unacceptable. The respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of States is a fundamental principle enshrined in international law, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter. By launching a full-scale invasion against Ukraine, Russia has deliberately further violated its international obligations and commitments. At the same time, Russia has underestimated the courage and the determination of Ukraine and its

people to fight for their freedom, sovereignty and future. In the face of this attack against fundamental values and principles, our resolve to stand with Ukraine is unshakeable. Russia should not underestimate this either.

Mr Chair, the mandate of the Forum for Security Cooperation is to **address the security needs and concerns** of all participating States, to **cooperate towards peace in our region**, through **increased military transparency and predictability** and **building mutual trust**. This common task has been flouted by Russia and Belarus. They undermined all attempts for a meaningful and result-oriented dialogue. The OSCE instruments in the politico-military dimension, including the Vienna Document, have been blatantly violated by Russia and Belarus.

Russia's actions delivered unprecedented damage to the spirit of cooperation among participating States. **Rebuilding trust will not be an easy task**. The first step, however, is **to end the ongoing senseless bloodshed** and destruction. Therefore, **we urge Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions** and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. **We also reiterate our call on Belarusian authorities to stop enabling the Russian aggression** and to abide by its international obligations.

M. Chair, we would like to use this opportunity to assure the entire Belgian team of our full support during your tenure as FSC Chair and wish you every success.

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