



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Special Permanent Council No. 1201
Vienna, 12 November 2018**

**EU Statement on "Russia's ongoing Aggression against
Ukraine and the Illegal Occupation of Crimea"**

The EU strongly condemns the so-called local “elections” that were carried out on 11 November by Russia-backed armed formations. These so-called “elections” are yet another brazen violation of international and Ukrainian law and the Minsk Agreements and we consider them null and void. The Minsk Agreements provide for local elections to be held in certain areas in Donbas within the framework of the Ukrainian legislation once proper security conditions are in place, in accordance with relevant OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. We and others have repeatedly called on the Russian Federation to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full and not undermine them. In this context we recall also the Chairperson in Office statement of 8 November. Regrettably the Russian Federation has failed to do so. We reiterate that the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements remains key to reaching a lasting peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. In this regard, the EU welcomes Ukraine’s decision to prolong the Law on Special Status for parts of eastern Ukraine until the end of 2019.

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 OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We reiterate our 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. 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 information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations. The duration of the European Union's economic 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 the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and AUSTRALIA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.