



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1054 Vienna, 13 September 2023

EU Opening Statement

1. The European Union and its Member States congratulate Canada on assuming the role of the Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation. We thank you, Ambassador Kinnear, for providing us with an overview of the programme of your chairpersonship for the next four months and we look forward to working closely with you and your team for the duration of your tenure.
2. Madam Chair, Canada is now the sixth chair of this body, whose work is affected, indeed polluted, by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. When we meet today, it is already over one and a half years since Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine started on 24 February 2022. Last week's attack on the city of Kostyantynivka's central market in Ukraine's Donetsk region, killing at least 17 people, including one child, demonstrated once again the continuous immense suffering of Ukraine and its people, but also of their incredible bravery and resilience in the face of such merciless onslaught and barbaric attacks. Every new day of Russia's appalling acts brings unspeakable suffering, death and destruction. We further condemn the systematic, unjustifiable and brutal attacks by Russia against the population and civilian infrastructure, including on the Danube ports close to the border of EU Member States.
3. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's brutal war of aggression. as well as the continued support by the Belarusian authorities. On 8-10 September, Russia held illegally so-called "elections" in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol and in parts of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of Ukraine. The EU and its Member States strongly condemn the holding of illegitimate so-called "elections" by Russia which we do not and will not recognise, including their results. We reject this further futile attempt by Russia to legitimise or normalise its illegal military control and attempted annexation of parts of Ukrainian territories, It represents yet another manifest violation of international

law, including the UN Charter, and Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Voting in Ukrainian territories took place in the context of coercion, fear and repression.

4. The EU and its Member States will continue to support Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as its rightful self-defence against the appalling Russian aggression. Once again, we urge Russia to immediately stop its war of aggression and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire internationally recognised territory of Ukraine. Furthermore, all those responsible for war crimes and other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine must be held accountable.
5. The Forum for Security Cooperation was established to increase military security and stability in the OSCE area. However, Canada will be chairing the Forum in a context where one participating State, the Russian Federation, continues to wage an unprovoked war against another participating State, Ukraine.
6. Ambassador Kinnear, we fully support the very pertinent programme of the Canadian Chairpersonship for this Forum. Our utmost priority within this Forum is to continue to address Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its grave and tragic repercussions. At the same time, we also recognise the importance of engaging in broader discussions, as outlined in your overview, including mine action, international humanitarian law, the women, peace, and security agenda as well as information integrity in the military space. These topics fit well into a more general discussion within the politico-military dimension of the OSCE. Moreover, they are entirely relevant within the specific context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its dire humanitarian consequences.
7. In this respect, we welcome your planned joint FSC-PC session addressing the mental health impacts of war. The psychological suffering caused by war may not always be visible, but it can be just as devastating as physical harm.
8. Let us assure you that the Canadian FSC Chairpersonship can count on our full support and active engagement in the coming months. We wish you, Ambassador Kinnear, and your able team, every success in this challenging task.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and 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.