



EUROPEAN UNION

30th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council Skopje, 30 November - 1 December 2023

EU Closing Statement

1. The European Union expresses its gratitude to the Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Osmani, and the 2023 OSCE Chairpersonship of North Macedonia for their hospitality in Skopje, and for the manner they steered the Organisation during turbulent times. We would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Igor Djundev, and his dedicated team in Vienna for their tireless efforts throughout this past year, marked by continuous challenges for the OSCE region and for the Organisation itself, stemming from Russia's ongoing illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. We are particularly grateful to the Chairpersonship of North Macedonia for keeping this aggression high on the Organisation's agenda. The EU also expresses its appreciation to the Chairpersonship for the dedicated efforts in fostering consensus on pressing matters for the OSCE's functionality.
2. We welcome the decisions by the Ministerial Council on the Chairpersonship-in-Office of Malta in 2024 and on the extension of mandates for the Secretary General and the Heads of the three autonomous institutions. We look forward to working with and supporting Malta in its goal to lead the Organisation and to ensure that the OSCE contributes to addressing the unprecedented challenges to European security we currently face.
3. We reaffirm our strong support for the OSCE Secretary General, the Secretariat and the other executive structures, including the field operations, as well as for the autonomous institutions and their Heads. It is our common responsibility to preserve the effectiveness of the organisation and maintain its ability to act under

these difficult circumstances and allow for its effective functioning across all three dimensions, including by providing adequate financial resources. We also look forward to our continued fruitful cooperation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as with the OSCE Partners for cooperation.

4. We call upon all participating States to recognise the importance of providing the OSCE with continuity under strong leadership, particularly when its principles, commitments and values are more crucial than ever for our common security.
5. For a second consecutive year, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine marked the Ministerial Council meeting. Just like last year, however, Russia did not succeed in its attempts to misuse this forum to legitimise its war of aggression and deflect its responsibility for it. Russia's groundless claims and false accusations were once again met with resounding condemnation of its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine as a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and OSCE principles and commitments, as well as the most critical threat to our common security. Against this background, the continuous overwhelming support among the participating States for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders underlined the non-negotiable and irrevocable nature of the core norms, principles and commitments that lie at the heart of European security.
6. In upholding these norms and principles, the EU and its Member States remain determined to stand by Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes. On the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor events, we reiterate our grave concern about the repetition of the reprehensible actions of the past, with Russia once again using food as a weapon, with severe and tragic consequences for many countries worldwide.
7. For a second consecutive Ministerial Council the call for ensuring accountability for all heinous acts committed as part of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including for the crime of aggression, resounded loud and clear. We also took a good note of the recommendations of the Civic Solidarity Platform Parallel

Conference in this regard, as well as of the conclusions of the Side event initiated by Ukraine under the title: “In the Shadow of Russia’s Occupation: How to Ensure Accountability and Civilian Detainees’ Return”. In this context, we will continue to demand the immediate release by Russia of all individuals unlawfully deprived of their liberty, including the three arbitrarily detained OSCE staff members. Russia must ensure that all Ukrainians in Russian captivity are treated in full compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

8. Grounded on our common OSCE commitments and our renewed determination to implement them, we will continue to use, preserve and even enhance its tools and assets in all three dimensions of security.
9. To conclude, the crisis we confront is not a flaw in the common rules and underlying principles of the European security order. It is not a failure of the OSCE. It is the failure of one participating State, actively supported by another one, to abide by those rules and principles. We call on Russia to immediately stop its war of aggression against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We can achieve a common, indivisible security space built on trust and cooperation and at peace when all 57 participating States uphold universal values, principles, and rules they all have willingly agreed upon.

We request that this statement be attached to the journal of today’s Ministerial Council meeting.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO, 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.