



## EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1031  
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### EU Closing Statement

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Mr Chair, **Belgium took over** the steering wheel of the **Forum for Security Cooperation in the midst of Russia's war** that has brought death and destruction to Ukraine, isolation and shame to Russia, and uncertainty and questioning about the future of Europe's security and stability, and the international rules-based order.

We will continue to state it loud and clear: **Russia's unprovoked, illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine** is a **blatant breach of international law**, including the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments. We condemn it in the strongest possible terms. **Fundamental principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-use of force** remain non-negotiable and must be defended vigorously. For many decades, they have been the bedrock of peace on our continent, however fragile it was.

Russia's war of aggression is **illegal** under international law with regard to ***ius ad bellum***. Moreover, the last ten months also showed **a total disregard by Russia for *ius in bello***. We have witnessed massive indiscriminate and deliberate attacks against civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, razing whole towns to the ground. There are credible reports of mistreatment of prisoners of war, of sexual and gender-based violence, abductions and deportations to Russia and forced adoptions. These are brutal, appalling and unacceptable acts. Nevertheless, even in the cold and dark, Ukraine and the Ukrainian people have been heroically and effectively resisting the aggression, revealing how ruthless, immoral and futile the Kremlin's plan was from the very beginning. **We**, and many others around this table, have and **will stand with Ukraine**, which is a victim of Russia's aggression, as long as it takes. Russia bears full responsibility for this war. All perpetrators and those responsible for this illegal war and any crimes committed must be held to account.

Mr Chair, **Russia's actions and rhetoric** are doubtlessly having a **detrimental effect** also on **our Organisation**, including the work of this Forum. The common task

of the FSC is to enable all participating States to cooperate towards peace in our region by reducing military risks and enhancing predictability through increased military transparency. It has been blatantly undermined and misused by Russia and Belarus. When the rules of an Organisation, the letter and spirit of its specific instruments are deliberately violated, **the responsibility lies fully with the violator**, not with the Organisation, and certainly not with the documents that had been jointly elaborated and agreed, nor with anyone else. The **OSCE acquis in the politico-military dimension is unique and worth preserving**. We will need it, when those who speak about indivisible security will finally have stopped violating their neighbours' territorial integrity and sovereignty. There will be plenty of tasks to focus on in the future, including in the very practical area of SALW and mine action.

Mr Chair, we **commend you and the entire Belgian team for your excellent work** under these more than difficult circumstances. You kept the **focus on the most pertinent issue: Russia's war and its tragic consequences**. The consequences for **children**, almost 500 of them have already died as a result of Russia's aggression, consequences for **women and girls**, with millions seeking shelter and refuge while being exposed to risks of human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. You have also highlighted the essential role that women play through full, equal and meaningful participation in matters of peace and security. We also appreciated the exchanges on **international humanitarian law, Code of Conduct and explosive hazards**, and the introduction to our deliberations of the topic of **environment and armed forces**.

The focus on the **cross-dimensional character of certain topics** through the side events with the three OSCE Committees was a welcome innovation during the Belgian Chairpersonship. You also managed to highlight the high value of **the OSCE field missions on the ground**.

We look forward to the upcoming **FSC Chairpersonship of Bosnia and Herzegovina**. We assure our colleagues of our full support and engagement in the upcoming trimester, which will most likely be as challenging as the past ones.

Mr Chair, we hope that we all here will be able to restore in the future the minimum of trust on which fruitful work in our Forum could be based. **For this, Russia has to stop the war**. We, therefore, reiterate our demand **that Russia 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 firm call on Belarus to stop enabling Russian aggression**, to abide by its international obligations and to stop allowing its territory to serve as a staging ground for attacks against Ukraine, which is an act of aggression itself. We will continue to stand firmly by Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in defending Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE and REPUBLIC of MOLDOVA, the EFTA countries NORWAY, ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\*North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.