



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Reinforced Permanent Council No. 1391  
Vienna, 29 September 2022**

**The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine:  
illegal attempts to legalize the occupation of the eastern  
Ukraine**

**Statement delivered by EEAS Managing Director for Russia,  
Eastern partnership, Central Asia, Regional cooperation and  
OSCE**

**Mr. Michael Siebert**

Mr. Chair,

We appreciate your decision to convene this urgently needed meeting at this critical time for European security and the rules-based international order.

Allow me also to recognise the presence of the Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister, thank her for her powerful intervention and assure her of the European Union's unwavering support to Ukraine and its people.

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the illegal sham "referenda" conducted in parts of the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine currently and partially occupied by Russia. The EU does not and will never recognise these illegal "referenda" and their falsified outcome, nor any decision taken on the basis of this outcome, and urges all OSCE participating States and Members of the international community in general to do the same. By organizing these illegal sham "referenda", Russia aims at changing by force the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine, which constitutes a clear and serious breach of the UN Charter. Their outcome is null and void and cannot produce any legal effect whatsoever.

Russia's illegal sham "referenda" have no legitimacy and blatantly violate international law as well as Russia's international obligations. They were conducted while Russia is waging

a war of aggression against Ukraine and aim at the annexation by Russia of Ukraine's occupied territories. They violate Ukraine's Constitution and Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Furthermore, Russia's illegal sham "referenda" in Ukraine took place amidst widespread and systematic abuses of human rights as well as intimidation of Ukrainian citizens by Russia and its illegitimately appointed authorities in Ukraine's occupied territories. Therefore, these illegal "votes", held under pressure and in a rush, do not represent the expression of the free will of the people living in these regions of Ukraine. The EU commends the courage of the Ukrainian residents who opposed the "referenda" and continue to resist the Russian occupation.

All those involved in organising these illegal sham "referenda" as well as those responsible for other violations of international law in Ukraine will be held accountable. Additional restrictive measures against Russia will be brought forward in this regard.

We also strongly condemn the recent sentencing of two national SMM staff members, to 13-year imprisonments. We call on Russia to assume its responsibility as an OSCE participating State and to immediately and unconditionally release all OSCE staff members.

The EU remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and demands that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. In line with the UN Charter and international law, Ukraine is exercising its legitimate right to defend itself against the Russian aggression to regain full control of its territory and has the right to liberate occupied territories within its internationally recognised borders. The EU and its Member States will continue to support Ukraine's efforts to this end, as long as necessary.

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

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