



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **31<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council Malta, 5 - 6 December 2024**

#### **EU Closing Statement**

**Delivered by EEAS Managing Director for Eastern Europe, Russia,  
Central Asia, regional cooperation and OSCE  
Mr. Michael Siebert**

1. The European Union extends its sincere gratitude to the Maltese Chair, Deputy Prime Minister Ian Borg, for the hospitality and the leadership demonstrated during a particularly challenging year. The ongoing illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine has tested the Organisation's resilience and functionality. We also commend Ambassador Natasha Meli Daudey and her dedicated team in Vienna for their tireless efforts, particularly in fostering consensus on critical issues such as the Top 4 appointments, future Chairpersonships, and the Unified Budget.
2. We welcome the newly appointed Secretary General and the heads of the three autonomous institutions, and we underscore the shared responsibility of all participating States to maintain the OSCE's effectiveness across all three dimensions of security, firmly rooted in our shared principles and commitments.
3. Adequate financial resources are essential to achieve this goal. We regret that, despite the tremendous efforts of the Maltese Chairpersonship until the eleventh hour, a decision on the 2024 Unified Budget could not be reached.
4. For the third consecutive year, Russia has failed in its attempts to misuse this forum to justify its war of aggression or deflect its accountability. Groundless claims and false accusations were met with widespread and resolute condemnation. Russia's brutal war represents a flagrant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, as well as OSCE principles and commitments.

This war poses the gravest threat to European security. The overwhelming support among participating States for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders highlights the unwavering and non-negotiable nature of these fundamental principles.

5. The EU and its Member States remain steadfast in their commitment to supporting Ukraine and its people. Accountability for all crimes committed in the context of Russia's war of aggression, including the crime of aggression itself, is a priority. We also emphasise the importance of the discussions held during the side event, *"In Russia's Captivity: Way to Freedom,"* co-sponsored by the EU. We will continue to demand the immediate release of all individuals unlawfully detained by Russia, including the three OSCE staff members. Russia must fully comply with its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, ensuring humane treatment for all Ukrainian captives.
6. We recall the EU's attachment to the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the signing of a peace agreement.
7. We reaffirm our commitment to preserving and strengthening the OSCE's tools and mechanisms across all three dimensions of security, grounded in our shared principles. We look forward to supporting Finland as it assumes the Chairmanship and leads the Organisation in addressing the current unprecedented challenges to European security.
8. To conclude, the crisis we face is not due to a flaw in the rules or principles of the European security order, nor is it a failure of the OSCE. Rather, it is the failure of one participating State, actively supported by another, to adhere to these agreed-upon principles. We call on Russia to immediately end its war of aggression against Ukraine and to fully and unconditionally withdraw its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognised territory. A common and indivisible security space can only be achieved when all participating States uphold the universal values, principles, and rules to which they have committed.
9. We request that this statement be included in the journal of today's Ministerial Council meeting.

I thank you.