



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security and Co-operation N°1043

Vienna, 3 May 2023

EU Statement for Security Dialogue on “Black Sea Region: Security Horizons”

1. Madam Chair, **the European Union and its Member States commend your initiative** on the topic of today's security dialogue that is so necessary and **critical in light of Russia's illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine**. We extend a warm welcome to our distinguished speakers and express our appreciation for their insightful presentations on the challenges and opportunities within the Black Sea region's security environment.
2. Madam Chair, we continue to **condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms**. This war exemplifies Russia's **blatant disregard for international law**, including the UN Charter and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It poses an overt challenge to the international rules-based order, in defiance of our shared OSCE principles and commitments, which are fundamental to security and stability in the Black Sea region and beyond.
3. For over a decade, **the Russian Federation systematically and deliberately eroded the security order in the Black Sea region and beyond**. The illegal annexation and militarisation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and the severe human rights violations committed there by Russia, the obstruction of ship passage through the Kerch Strait, the unlawful construction of the Kerch bridge, and the **tactical, operational and strategic use of the Black Sea in its ongoing war of aggression**—from the naval supporting fire against Ukrainian coastal cities to the ruthless blockade of Ukraine's ports—are shameful

instances of Russia's destructive approach to the region. We commend the **courageous resistance of the Ukrainian Navy and Armed Forces**, which rightfully exercise their right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

4. Madam Chair, **the Black Sea is a crucial nexus** for regional and global trade routes, supply chains and energy security. Its stability has far-reaching implications and impacts socio-economic development well beyond the region. Russia's illegal maritime blockade of Ukraine's ports, preventing the export of Ukrainian grain and other agricultural products, was a ruthless tactic that continues to endanger millions of livelihoods and raise global food prices. **Food must never be weaponised**. It is essential to emphasise that the European Union's sanctions do not target trade in agricultural and food products, including grain and fertiliser, between Russia and third countries.
5. The European Union and its Member States underscore the importance of the **UN Black Sea Grain Initiative** and support all efforts to maintain this vital **humanitarian corridor for global food security**. In May 2022, the European Union swiftly launched **the Solidarity Lanes Action Plan**, mobilising 1 billion EUR through 2023 to support alternative logistics routes for Ukraine's agricultural exports. These collective efforts have facilitated the export of over 32 million tonnes of grain and other agricultural products in recent months, positively impacting global market prices and need further extension.
6. Madam Chair, in line with the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, **we must not lose sight of other multifaceted challenges affecting the Black Sea region posed by Russia's brutal war of aggression**. Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced, enduring irreparable physical and psychological traumas in the process. Russia's reported unlawful deportation and transfer of children marks a new low point in its aggression against Ukraine. Deliberate targeting of civilian objects and critical energy infrastructures, including the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, have exacerbated the humanitarian catastrophe and caused severe environmental damage, polluting air, water and soil and threatening biodiversity of the Black Sea and its shores.

7. **The European Union remains committed to fostering peace, stability, and prosperity in the strategically important Black Sea region**, as outlined in the 2022 EU Strategic Compass. To this end, the restoration of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova in their internationally recognized borders is essential. A continuous, innovative, solution-oriented, diplomatic and political dialogue is needed to transform the Black Sea Region into a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. Security also means societal resilience fostered by democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, accountability, fighting disinformation, and having reliable food and energy supplies. The Black Sea Synergy's flexible and sector-oriented framework has facilitated regional cooperation and dialogue including through its two flagship initiatives: the **Common Maritime Agenda** and its scientific pillar, the **Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda**. In addition, there are key projects in the pipeline such as the planned **Black Sea Connectivity** submarine digital cable and an electric cable to export green energy from the South Caucasus to the EU, aligning with the priorities of the EU Global Gateway, implemented in the region via the Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership. We reaffirm our **dedication to collaborating with international and regional organizations in the area**, including the Black Sea Commission on the Protection against Pollution and the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.
8. Madam Chair, the European Union and its Member States stand firm in **supporting lasting solutions rooted in international law to the conflicts lacerating the region**. We remain unwavering in supporting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia. **We welcome the First Black Sea Security Conference of the International Crimea Platform** in Bucharest on 12-13 April and the cooperation agreement addressing common security concerns in the region concluded by Romania, Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova.
9. In conclusion, we reiterate our call on Russia to end its war against Ukraine and recommit itself to the full and faithful adherence to the core principles of sovereign equality, inviolability of borders, and territorial integrity. In these stormy times, **respect for OSCE principles and commitments inspired by international law**

can ensure a luminous lighthouse is relit to restore peace and promote prosperity in the Black Sea region.

Thank you.

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