

OSCE joint FSC-PC meeting under Vienna Document Chapter 3: UK statement

Thank you Mister Chair, I would like to start by thanking you and your team for your efforts to convene this important and urgent meeting today.

The UK shares Ukraine's significant concerns about the recent increased Russian military activity on Ukraine's border and in illegally annexed Crimea. We fully support Ukraine's use of this Vienna Document mechanism to seek an explanation from Russia for this military activity and request greater transparency in order to deescalate the situation.

Mister Chair, the Vienna Document is a key confidence and security building measure, through which we build transparency and reduce risk. Russia's decision not to participate in the meeting convened on Saturday under Paragraph 16.2 of the Vienna Document, and indeed, Russia's stated intention not to engage at all in any Chapter III meetings only deepens our concerns. We recognise a member of the Russian Delegation is present today and hope they will show a change of heart and now engage constructively here today after hearing the contributions of other participating States.

The F10 message issued on 7 April was a creditable attempt by Ukraine to achieve greater transparency about Russia's military build-up, and to reduce the risk of further escalation. It was a legitimate request that Russia was obliged, under the terms of the Vienna Document, to answer in a satisfactory manner. Unfortunately, Russia chose not to.

At the meeting on Saturday, in which 39 participating States took part, Ukraine and a number of other states raised specific concerns and called on Russia to answer specific questions. These are contained in the Chair's Report, CBM/SE/21/0004/F14/0, and remain unanswered. We urge Russia to answer these questions here and now today, and so uphold the OSCE principles and commitments that it freely signed up to, and act responsibly to de-escalate the situation.

We would highlight that it is Ukraine's right, as a participating State, to issue a Chapter III request for explanation in relation to any unusual and unscheduled military activities outside normal peacetime locations and which are militarily significant. Russia's refusal to engage with the process to date because it "sees no reason for the implementation of procedures" completely undermines the purpose for which the risk reduction measure was designed.

Mister Chair, the UK strongly supports the political resolve demonstrated by Ukraine to resist ongoing Russian aggression, resolve the conflict through political means, and de-escalate the conflict. Ukraine has acted responsibly and with great restraint in the face of the renewed provocations by the Russian backed armed formations which have unfortunately resulted in yet further Ukrainian Armed Forces casualties. Russia's increased rhetoric and

disinformation also risks further escalation and is utterly irresponsible. We call on Russia to cease these reckless actions, and instead focus on implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements and the Normandy Summit held in Paris in December 2019.

The UK is unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including its territorial waters. We do not and will not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.

It is Russia's actions that continue to undermine European security including through its disregard for fundamental OSCE principles, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states, and the use of threat of force. We therefore call again on Russia to return to full compliance with OSCE principles, to fulfil its commitments, and to take urgent de-escalatory measures

I would like to finish by reiterating that the door remains open for Russia to use the Vienna Document, to provide reassurance about its intentions near Ukraine's borders and in illegally annexed Crimea, here and now today. We call on Russia to meet the above recommendations and engage in Risk Reduction measures without further delay. Russia's continued failure to do so poses a serious threat to the security of the whole OSCE region.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.