

Resolution

The escalation of tension in Eastern Ukraine

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting via Zoom, 24.04.2021

Recognizing that:

1. OHCHR estimates the total number of conflict-related casualties in Ukraine (from 14 April 2014 to 15 February 2020) to be 41,000-44,000: 13,000-13,200 killed (at least 3,350 civilians, an estimated 4,100 Ukrainian forces and an estimated 5,650 members of armed groups); and 29,000-31,000 injured (approximately 7,000-9,000 civilians, 9,500-10,500 Ukrainian forces and 12,500-13,500 members of armed groups).¹
2. On April 9, President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, stated that since the beginning of 2021, 26 Ukrainian servicemen have died in eastern Ukraine.
3. As of 30 March 2021, the total number of the Russian Armed Forces along the state border of Ukraine, in the temporarily occupied territory in Donetsk, Luhansk regions and Crimea is about 87-90 thousand servicemen. It also includes 1,100 tanks, 2,500 armored combat vehicles, 1,600 artillery and missile systems, 340 combat aircraft and 240 combat helicopters, more than 50 ships, and 6 submarines. Nevertheless, this amount of the Russian Armed Forces along the state border of Ukraine is going to be increased due to current military exercises "West 2021".²
4. The increasing tensions in eastern Ukraine in time of a significant Russian military build-up near Ukrainian eastern border and on the territory of the illegally occupied Crimea accompanied by provocations from the Russian side might escalate into a military confrontation.
5. The increasing number of casualties caused by multiple violations of the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine is the worrying sign of the destabilization of the situation in the region for

¹ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/29thReportUkraine_EN.pdf

² <https://www.euronews.com/2021/04/19/eu-foreign-affairs-chief-150-000-russian-troops-at-ukraine-border>



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which the Russian Federation is directly responsible since it has a direct influence on the security situation in the Donbas region.

6. On March 31, in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group, composed of representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russia refused to support Ukraine's offer to confirm the desire to adhere to the ceasefire in the Donbass from midnight on April 1.

7. The statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, that the escalation of tension can lead to the destruction of Ukraine, as well as other provocative statements of Russian officials and state media further escalates the situation.

8. Threats from Russian officials that negotiations about Ukrainian accession to NATO can only worsen the situation in eastern Ukraine contradicts the fact that Ukraine as an independent and sovereign member of the international community has the right to decide freely about its geopolitical orientation.

Acknowledging that:

1. The peace and stability of eastern Ukraine are key for European security. The illegal annexation of a part of the Ukrainian territory represents one of the key obstacles to this goal.
2. The interference in Ukrainian internal affairs – including its geopolitical orientation – is unacceptable.
3. The development of cooperative relations with Ukraine presents one of the cornerstones of the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative.
4. The aggressive behavior of the Russian Federation presents a direct challenge to the peace and stability in Europe.



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The YEPP council:

1. Condemns Russian aggressive behavior and calls for the stopping of military build-up near the Ukrainian borders and on the territory of occupied Crimea.
2. Appeals to representatives of the European Union and leaders of European states to condemn the Russian aggressive behavior and support Ukraine. The European Union should be prepared to back this position by appropriate measures, including new economic sanctions targeting Russian leading officials as well as other entities involved in the conflict, that can be swiftly applied in the case of the escalation. The consequences for Russia in case of further escalation should be communicated in advance.
3. Calls on the European Parliament to make a statement condemning the massive build-up of the Russian troops along the Ukrainian borders as well as in occupied territories of Ukraine.
4. YEPP appreciates the restrained and constructive approach of Ukrainian authorities and fully supports their commitment to a political and diplomatic resolution of the conflict.
5. Supports the continuation of the implementation of the Minsk Protocols, in particular its security parts which might prevent a similar escalation in eastern Ukraine in the future. This goal should be achieved in close cooperation with EU partners including the United States, The Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.
6. Calls on Russia to put an end to its military intervention in Ukraine and stop the illegal occupation of Ukraine's territories and the violations of its sovereignty in territories as Crimean peninsula and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.