

**Ms. Schmid:**

It is an honour to be here on behalf of the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. I would like to thank the Ukrainian presidency for convening this meeting.

Please allow me to start by expressing High Representative Mogherini's heartfelt condolences on the passing away of Ambassador Vitaly Churkin. He not only played a leading role on the Security Council for so many years, but he was also a very respected and important interlocutor for the European Union (EU) on the many issues that are of key interest to the Union at the United Nations. I was actually supposed to meet with him yesterday, and I was deeply shocked and saddened to learn the news upon arrival. We are left with deep sorrow and our thoughts are with our Russian colleagues and in particular with his family.

For many of its citizens, the European Union remains a unique path to lasting peace, stability and prosperity. The continent has, however, not been immune to conflicts. I very much agree with the Secretary-General that we cannot take peace for granted. As conflicts grow more complex, our efforts to address them need to evolve. These efforts now involve action at multiple levels — local, regional and global — with a wide variety of stakeholders and across the conflict cycle, from early warning to conflict prevention, mediation, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction.

This is why we so much welcome what the Secretary-General has said right from the beginning about his focus on conflict prevention and mediation. This goes hand in hand with the key objective of the European Union's global strategy, which is to address conflicts at an early stage while building the resilience of societies around us. I very much associate myself with Lamberto Zannier when he speaks about the need to include women in all stages of the conflict cycle.

Allow me to highlight the implementation of this approach by the European Union on the European continent.

First of all, promoting stability in the countries closest to the European Union in the western Balkans is a natural strategic priority. The accession perspective to the European Union has carved out a path to heal the wounds of the past and foster stability in the region. It has encouraged transformation and modernization among countries to whom we have given a firm commitment that their future lies within the European Union. At the same time, the region's fragilities deserve our continued attention. The Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, as facilitated by High Representative Mogherini, between the leaders of both sides has already led to substantial progress in the normalization of their relations.

Secondly, stabilization has been placed at the heart of the recently reviewed European neighbourhood policy in which the European Union offers further cooperation on civilian security sector reform, tackling terrorism and extremism, disrupting organized crime, strengthening cybersecurity and, last but not least, conflict prevention. Through the Eastern Partnership dimension of this policy, we are contributing to conflict resolution by focusing on the enhancement of our partners' resilience. This means taking new approaches, such as strengthening institutions and good governance, taking advantage of market opportunities, and enhancing mobility, people-to-people links and interconnectivity.

Thirdly, the European security order is firmly based on the principles of sovereignty, independence and the territorial integrity of States; the inviolability of borders; the peaceful settlement of disputes and the free choice of countries in deciding their own future. Unfortunately, these long-standing key principles of European security have not been respected. The crisis in and around Ukraine has demonstrated this. Our support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence is unwavering, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/262 of March 2014 and our fundamental principles. We continue to condemn and will not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. European Union leaders have repeatedly made this very clear.

In accordance with resolution 2202 (2015), the EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements to pursue a sustainable political solution. We call in particular on Russia to use its influence with the separatists. The EU fully supports the efforts undertaken through the Normandy format, the Trilateral Contact Group and the presence of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The EU and its member States are the biggest contributors to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which is doing a very important job. The continued fighting and loss of life in eastern Ukraine demands redoubled efforts to fully implement the Minsk agreements. Let me also say, as was already stated by Lamberto Zannier, that measures, including those recently taken, that increase tensions and are not in the spirit of the agreements must be avoided. As High Representative Mogherini has stated, the EU stands ready to increase its support for the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Fourthly, unresolved conflicts pose an obstacle to peace, stability and regional development and require a consolidated effort to manage and resolve. The EU supports a peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict that is based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova with a special status for Transnistria. In that regard, we remain committed to active involvement in the settlement process within the 5+2 agenda in order to support the efforts of the Chair in Office of the OSCE in Europe.

In Georgia the EU's Monitoring Mission ensures respect for the ceasefire at the line of control with the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia is tasked with engaging with all stakeholders on measures aimed at peaceful conflict resolution. Our cooperation with the United Nations and the OSCE is particularly advanced in that area.

On the unresolved Nagorno Karabakh conflict, our Special Representative supports and complements the OSCE Minsk Group and its co-Chairs, while, at the same time, the EU also supports civil society and promotes peacebuilding activities across the conflict divide.

Finally, we are witnessing history in the making in Cyprus as the United Nations-facilitated talks between the two Cypriot leaders reach their end game. Never has a settlement been so close. The EU has a special role to play, because a future united Cyprus will be a member of the European Union. We are represented at the highest level in the Conference on Cyprus in Geneva, with both President Juncker and High Representative Mogherini personally engaged and committed.

To conclude, let me reiterate that the European Union will continue to be a first supporter of the multilateral approach and a strong United Nations, and will remain a very reliable and predictable partner in striving for common ground and win-win solutions in crises that are otherwise difficult to solve.