Strasbourg, 20 April 2021

**Escalation of tensions and ongoing destabilisation in Eastern Ukraine**

ALDE-PACE joins its voice to the many voices expressing concern about the new escalation of tensions between Russia and Ukraine and about the biggest Russian military build-up since 2014 near the Ukrainian borders and on the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula.

We mourn the victims in Eastern Ukraine and deplore the growing number of ceasefire violations. This conflict in the very heart of Europe has already claimed lives of more than 13000 people. We call to avoid any provocation which may ignite the region and increase the number of victims.

On 21 April, the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin will address the Federal Assembly. We call on our Russian colleagues in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to convey our message to the Russian authorities and to President Putin:

- Russian military build-up and aggressive rhetoric and actions must stop.
- De-escalation is urgently required in the region and all effort should be put into finding a political solution to the conflict.
- Russia must restore transparency and information sharing about its military activities in line with the OSCE standards and uphold its OSCE commitments and Council of Europe statutory obligations.
- Granting the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) full and unhindered access to all areas controlled by separatist forces in the Donbas region is more important than ever. Russia should use its influence to guarantee such access.

We reiterate our unwavering support to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognised borders and recall that the respect of international law and the values and standards of the Council of Europe are key for maintaining and restoring peace and democratic security on the European continent.