



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°826 Vienna, 20 July 2016

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States remain deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in eastern Ukraine. We condemn the sharp increase in ceasefire violations in Luhansk region marking the highest number recorded in the region over the past five weeks. We are particularly concerned by the increase in fighting around Stanytsia Luhanska where the sides are only 400 m apart after the separatists crossed the bridge and set up a new position across the contact line a month ago. We are disturbed by the denial of the SMM access to the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge by separatists. We once again urge all sides to strictly adhere to the ceasefire, immediately de-escalate and disengage, and unconditionally and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-regulated weapons.

We deplore continuing obstructions to the SMM's work which occur particularly in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government, including in Petrivske, Zolote and Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, the areas recently proposed for disengagement, as well as along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. As reported by the SMM, last week, 13 out of the 14 denials of access happened in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government. We underline that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We underline the role of the JCCC in this context and call on all sides to meaningfully engage to increase its effectiveness.

We call on all sides in the Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups to agree on steps toward the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. This includes further measures to enhance the security situation and agreeing on modalities of holding the local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR.

We recall our firm position that established conditions for ODIHR monitoring, including ensuring security and access, must be met.

We note with concern the report released on 14 July by the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine highlighting the widespread killings that have taken place in Ukraine since January 2014 and the very limited accountability that has taken place. This underlines the urgent need to end the armed conflict and to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern regarding information about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone. We call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn. All foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential.

We recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to strictly observe these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.