



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°830 Vienna, 28 September 2016

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States welcome the signing of the Framework Agreement on Disengagement of Forces and Hardware by the Trilateral Contact Group on 21 September, as well as the establishment of three areas for disengagement in Zolote, Petrivske and Stanytsia Luhanska. This is an important achievement which will hopefully materialize in concrete progress on the ground leading to a sustained ceasefire. We expect more locations to follow, so that disengagement can be ensured along the entire contact line.

As the situation continues to be volatile, we once again underline the need to respect the ceasefire and to consolidate the recent progress by ensuring full, swift and verifiable disengagement, strictly adhering to the ceasefire and verifiably withdrawing all Minsk-regulated weapons. We underline the important role the SMM plays in this regard and stress the need for the SMM to have full, safe and unfettered access throughout the conflict area. We condemn any obstructions to the SMM's work, majority of which continue to occur in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government. The monitors' safety is of paramount importance and must be ensured by all sides at all times. We are concerned by any restrictions to the SMM's work, including in border areas, as these seriously impair the SMM's monitoring ability. The fact that restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement often correlate with the presence of weapons, as indicated by the SMM in the case where access was denied in separatist-controlled Debaltseve on 16 September, further gives rise to our concerns. We reiterate that any impediments to the SMM's work are unacceptable and must stop immediately.

We call on all sides 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 All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn.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 LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, 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.