



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council No 1022 Vienna, 3 November 2014

EU Statement in Response to the Report by the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the Chief Monitor, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, to this Special Permanent Council Meeting. We continue to strongly support the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), its leadership and its dedicated and professional staff. The SMM is playing a very significant and valuable role that has become even more vital after the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum. We commend its leadership for its ability to adapt to a fundamentally changing environment and its success in establishing a robust organisation that delivers impartial monitoring and reporting.

We note a number of recent SMM observations that provide an insight in the attempts to destabilize the situation in eastern parts of Ukraine as well as the influence of Russia on developments on the ground. For instance the observation that Luhansk and Donetsk experienced regular fighting with armed groups affiliated to the so-called “Luhansk People’s Republic” (“LPR”) and “Donetsk People’s Republic” (“DPR”) attempting to take a number of strategic points. And the observation that the head of one Russian contingent in the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) instructed members of the so-called “LPR” and “DPR” to avoid breaches of the ceasefire during election-day.

Mr Chair, we reiterate our full support for the urgent expansion of the SMM and we regret that lack of resources and equipment prevents the SMM from reaching its full potential.

The comments by Ambassador Apakan that the SMM is facing a serious financial bottleneck and only has budget available till the end of this year are of major

concern to us. We take this opportunity to urge all participating States to respond quickly and generously to the call for contributions. Rest assured that the EU and its Member States will continue to support the Mission by providing qualified staff, appropriate equipment and extra-budgetary contributions. We note that more than 2/3 of all SMM seconded staff are EU nationals.

Today, in addition to EU Member State contributions which will be announced separately, we are pleased to announce another EU contribution of 2 million euros from the Union's budget to be disbursed as of January 2015. This contribution will increase the overall EU contribution from the Union's budget to 7 million euros. The EU stands ready to consider further increasing its contribution. In addition, the EU will donate to the SMM four B6-type armoured vehicles on top of 40 soft-skin vehicles already delivered. While EU Member States bear the main responsibility for identifying SMM monitors, the EU stands ready to use its own civilian force generation capacities as well. The EU also stands ready to work on increased planning capacities in correlation with the needs of the mission.

Mr Chair, we deeply regret the lack of progress towards substantial OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian international border. Border and ceasefire monitoring remain closely interlinked and mutually dependent. We recall that the Minsk Protocol called for continuous monitoring of the border by the OSCE. The SMM should develop and share its planning on how it can contribute to an effective and comprehensive continuous monitoring of the border. And it should immediately take steps to begin border monitoring, including by the use of UAVs, and not wait for the mission to reach its full capacity.

We trust that the UAVs will be used where they can add most value. We note with concern that efforts were made by illegal armed groups to shoot down the UAVs operated by the SMM.

We call on all parties to ensure secure conditions for the free operation of UAVs in all parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, including along the border. Any possible military UAV Support Mission to the SMM must not restrict the use of the civilian SMM UAVs.

We are deeply concerned about SMM reports that members of the JCCC are portraying the Centre as an “OSCE Mission to South-East Ukraine” by misuse of OSCE insignia and attempts to subordinate SMM monitors and equipment to the JCCC. This is completely unacceptable and jeopardizes the impartiality and independence of the SMM. We note that SMM is seeking to correct these misunderstandings. We will continue to follow this issue closely and expect the SMM to continue reporting on the activities of the JCCC. We would appreciate if Ambassador Apakan could share his views on SMM’s relationship with the JCCC.

We appreciate the SMM reports and welcome the recent improvements, in particular with regard to the weekly reports, which have become more focused. We continue to rely on the SMM to report on the situation in the areas controlled by the armed separatists and would appreciate more systematic reporting on the implementation of all elements of the Minsk agreements.

The safety and security of SMM monitors is of paramount importance and they must have safe and free access to fulfil their mandate. We regret that monitors continue to be denied access to certain areas controlled by armed separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts in contravention of the Minsk Protocol. We also regret that the SMM has thus far had no access to Crimea. To deny access to SMM monitors is not acceptable and is in contradiction to its mandate.

We commend the SMM for its effort to facilitate access to the MH17 crash site over the past months. We repeat our call for immediate, safe and unrestricted access to the crash site as part of the ceasefire. There is an international imperative to complete repatriation of the human remains and allow resumption of the investigation on the ground.

We reiterate our strong support for the efforts of the Chairmanship, including within the Trilateral Contact Group, and the engagement of OSCE structures in Ukraine, including the Project Coordinator. Coordination and synergies between these structures continue to be essential.

Mr Chair, we continue to rely on the SMM to reduce tensions and foster peace, stability and security; and to monitor and support the implementation of all OSCE

principles and commitments in Ukraine. This is an extremely demanding and important task. We wish Ambassador Apakan and his staff success in their endeavours and once again express our strong support for their work.

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 country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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