

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1047
Vienna, 16 April 2015**

**EU Statement on Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and
Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments**

The European Union is gravely concerned about the massive increase in ceasefire violations in recent days, especially around Donetsk airport and Shyrokyne, including through the widespread use of heavy weapons, and about the suffering inflicted on civilians who remain in the area. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution of the conflict.

We reiterate our full support for the diplomatic efforts of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group and therefore echo the call made last Monday in Berlin by the foreign ministers of France, Germany, the Russian Federation and Ukraine for a full implementation of the ceasefire and conclusion of the withdrawal of heavy weapons. We welcome the call to include weapons with a calibre of less than 100 mm and tanks of all types among those that should be withdrawn. Furthermore, foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries must be withdrawn from the territory of Ukraine as stipulated in the Minsk package. We remain concerned that the SMM has still not received the baseline information that would allow for systematic verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons nor does it enjoy free and unhindered access. SMM must be allowed to fulfil its mandate and implement its tasks under the Minsk agreements.

We once again call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We recall the European Council Conclusions of 19-20 March in all their elements, in particular those linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. We reiterate that any solution must be

based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The provisions of the Minsk agreements concerning the political process are of major importance and require swift and sustained progress. We welcome the agreement reached at Monday's meeting in Berlin relating to the establishment as soon as possible of working groups within the Trilateral Contact Group on security, political process, humanitarian issues and economic affairs and rehabilitation. A quick launch of these working groups and the political will to make them effective, would be a significant step forward and could contribute to confidence building.

The Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory, without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

We continue to call for immediate substantial and effective OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over this border remains essential.

Mr Chairman, we remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in the illegally annexed Crimea. On 1 April the only remaining channel broadcasting in the Crimean Tatar-language, ATR TV, was taken off air. This constitutes a blatant violation of the right to freedom of expression and is part of a wider pattern of persecution and intimidation of the Crimean Tatar community by the Russian Federation.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We once again urge Russia to recognise by acts these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to 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, 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.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.