



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No 1055 Vienna, 28 May 2015

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

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The European Union is deeply concerned about the familiar pattern of a relative calm in the fighting in eastern Ukraine now being followed by increasing ceasefire violations according to the SMM. We are particularly concerned about the SMM's reports on the deteriorating situations around Donetsk airport, Shyrokyne and other hotspots. We also note with deep concern the heavy shelling of the strategically important coke and chemical plant in Avdiivka by Russia-backed separatists. We note that the SMM was forced to suspend its monitoring activities in Shyrokyne and Avdiivka. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will be a gross violation of the Minsk agreements and seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution.

As we stressed yesterday, we continue to strongly support the work of the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE Chairmanship. We also reiterate our support to the ongoing efforts of the Normandy format in facilitating the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. Full implementation of the Minsk agreements based on OSCE principles and commitments and full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity remains the only way forward. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We also expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full. 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 are therefore deeply concerned about the ever-mounting evidence of the direct involvement of military personnel of the Russian Federation in the fighting in eastern Ukraine. This was once again reconfirmed in the SMM's reporting on conversations with the two captured Russian servicemen in Kyiv who told the SMM 'that they were members of a unit of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation'. We call on Russia to withdraw all heavy weapons and its armed formations, military equipment as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine in line with the Minsk agreements. We furthermore remain concerned about the build-up of Russian troops next to the Ukrainian border and information about continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation.

We are also concerned about the SMM's regular reporting on movements of heavy weapons in violation of the Minsk withdrawal lines as well as previously recorded heavy weapons missing from holding areas on both sides. We once again call on the Minsk signatories to provide the SMM with the full baseline information and access that would allow for credible verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

We also note with deep concern from the SMM's reports that the mission continues to face restrictions in its monitoring activities and that the security situation in certain key areas prevents the SMM from monitoring. We note in particular that access remains fully or partly restricted in large swaths of separatist-controlled territory, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We once again urge all parties to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for the SMM to all parts of the conflict areas, including those controlled by the Russia-backed separatists, also in the border area with Russia. We expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists also in this regard.

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 took note with great concern of Amnesty International's latest report on Ukraine, describing incidents of torture committed by both sides and summary executions by Russia backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. We call upon all sides to ensure that the treatment of detainees is in line with relevant OSCE commitments and provisions of International Humanitarian Law. These allegations should be investigated and those responsible brought to justice. Access for international human rights organisations to all parts of Ukraine, including the areas under control of Russia-backed separatists and the illegally annexed Crimea, must be ensured.

Mr Chairman, 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 Country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, 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.