



**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 801-st FSC Plenary Meeting**

(28 October 2015 at 10.00, Hofburg)

(Agenda item 2)

Mr. Chairman,

We register with cautious optimism the continued relative respect of the ceasefire in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, as well as further progress in implementation of the September 29 Addendum to the Package of measures. However, we note with great concern that the Russian-backed illegal armed groups have moved some weaponry so as to put it beyond the scope of the Addendum and therefore beyond the verification process.

It directly relates militant-controlled training areas beyond the withdrawal line, where concentrations of main battle tanks and other heavy weapons have recently increased as reported by the SMM. From their current positions, these weapons can inflict grave damage and trigger an escalation of the conflict. Evidence gathered by the SMM shows that, once again, combined Russian-militant forces continue to be in breach of their commitments under the Minsk agreements.

We are also deeply concerned about the recent shelling incidents that were registered over the past week near the settlements of Pisky, Opytne and Shyrokyne, where the Ukrainian positions were attacked five times by pro-Russian militants with mortars 82mm calibre, grenade launchers and small arms. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. The ceasefire must be respected in full by Russia and the militants it supports.

Against the background of Ukraine's commitment to withdrawal at its second phase, we emphasize that any delay in the provision of baseline information and any restriction of SMM access by the Russia-backed separatists risk undermining the overall peace process. We therefore urge Russia and the illegal armed groups it supports to abide by the withdrawal agreement of 29 September fully and without delay. This should be also accompanied without any further delay by the full and unconditional withdrawal of all heavy weapons in accordance with the Minsk Package of Measures and subject to SMM verification. This is essential for the sustainability of the ceasefire and to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Distinguished colleagues,

Full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including to the border areas between Ukraine and Russia, is critical in order for the SMM to fulfill its mandate, as it was agreed at the Normandy Summit in Paris on 2 October. However, the SMM reports continue to prove a different situation. The border area in Luhansk oblast remains inaccessible for the SMM monitors because of systematic restrictions and there is still no full access to the border area in Donetsk oblast. SMM monitors and UAVs still face significant restrictions in large parts of separatist-held areas, in particular north-east of Mariupol and along the state border between Russia and Ukraine in Luhansk oblast. In period 22-27 October the SMM informed on 5 cases of denial of access, all of which took place in militant-controlled territory.

We are also concerned by SMM reports that pro-Russian militants have removed heavy weapons from designated storage areas and maintain large concentrations of weapons in breach of the commitments they made in Minsk:

- on 21 October in violation of respective withdrawal lines, a SMM unmanned aerial vehicle observed 16 battle tanks in “DPR”-controlled area of Sontseve (59km north-east of Mariupol). The SMM revisited two “DPR” heavy weapons holding areas, whose locations corresponded with respective withdrawal lines. At the first area, the SMM noted that two multiple launch rocket systems BM-21 Grad 122mm were absent. At the second area, the SMM was only allowed to observe the presence of weapons from a distance of 15-20 meters and could not verify the serial numbers;

- on 22 October the SMM revisited two places in “LPR”-controlled areas, where they had previously noted heavy weapons, beyond the respective withdrawal lines. The previously observed by the SMM six MLRS Grad 122mm were absent;

- on 23 October in areas beyond the respective withdrawal lines in Donetsk region, the SMM observed five MTLBs in the area of “DPR”-controlled Ternove (57km east of Donetsk), at least 20 tanks T-72 close to a training ground in the area of “DPR”-controlled Ternove (57km east of Donetsk), and three MTLBs in the area of “DPR”-controlled Khartsyzsk (26km east-north-east of Donetsk);

- on 24 October in areas beyond the respective withdrawal lines the SMM observed in “DPR”-controlled Ternove (57km east of Donetsk) 45 battle tanks T-64 and T-72. In “LPR”-controlled areas the SMM observed 12 howitzers D30, 16 military-type trucks and two armoured personnel carriers at a training area in Uspenka (23km south-west of Luhansk). At one area, “DPR” members denied the SMM access;

- on 25 October at a training area in Uspenka the SMM observed nine self-propelled howitzers (2S1, 122mm calibre) in area beyond the respective withdrawal line.

We call on Russia and the militants it supports to ensure that the weapons be promptly returned to their holding areas and are subject of SMM verification.

Distinguished colleagues,

Ukraine welcomes the increase of the OSCE observers’ activity in Donbas and plans to establish a forward patrol base in Horlivka. We welcome the first visit by the SMM observers to Debaltseve after two and a half months break due to restrictions of the militants.

We positively assess the opening of three new SMM patrol bases: two on the territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine and one on the militant-controlled territory. We support the plans to open the SMM patrol base in Donetsk and Yenakiyevo.

Mr. Chairman,

We continue to urge the Russian Federation to speed up the release of all hostages and illegally detained persons on the basis of “all-for-all” principle. According to the Security Service of Ukraine, at least **148 Ukrainian citizens among them 59 civilians still remain captive in Donbas**. We reiterate that the relevant provision of the Minsk Package of measures apply to all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens, including those in captivity in Russia. We demand their immediate and unconditional release.

In 2014-2015 Ukraine has provided to OSCE participating States in this Forum extensive evidence of the considerable Russian military presence in eastern Ukraine. Despite multiple requests by many delegations here in the FSC as well as in the PC, Russia has failed to provide explanations for the presence of most sophisticated military equipment, including the TOS-1 Buratino thermo baric rocket system and the Zhytel mobile jamming station in areas controlled by the Russian-backed illegal armed groups. We

continue to call on the Russian Federation to withdraw its fighters, weapons and military equipment from Ukraine, and to ensure that these withdrawals can be observed by the SMM.

Mr. Chairman,

With the ceasefire largely holding and initial implementation of the supplemental heavy weapons agreement underway, we have the chance to make progress on Minsk agreements in the next few months. Therefore, consistent effort must be made to seek good faith implementation by the Russian Federation and pro-Russian militants of all provisions of the Minsk agreements, in particular the withdrawal of heavy weapons, mercenaries and the Russian regular armed forces from the occupied territories in Donbas, exchange of prisoners, resuming Ukraine's control of the Ukrainian-Russian state border.

The interests of peace and security in Europe require that Russia restores its respect for international law and the OSCE principles and commitments. We urge Russia to put an end to its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation and annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which remain an integral part of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.