



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 1034 Vienna, 20 January 2015

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

The European Union is alarmed by the deteriorating situation in parts of eastern Ukraine and the dramatic increase in shooting and shelling. This includes the extensive use of heavy weaponry, as reported by the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM). We condemn the surge in violence and deplore the casualties, including many civilians. We condemn the use of densely populated areas to conduct military operations. We urge the armed separatists supported by Russia to cease provocative actions. We underline the importance of showing restraint when responding to such actions. We are deeply concerned about continued reports of a high and increasing number of illegal and foreign forces, mercenaries and military equipment on Ukrainian territory. This clearly runs counter to efforts aimed at de-escalation

The EU encourages all parties, in particular Russia, to actively engage in and fully implement the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum and without further delay. We continue to support the Minsk agreements as a step towards a sustainable political solution based on respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We once again underline Russia's responsibility in this regard. We call in particular for full adherence to the ceasefire, withdrawal of illegal and foreign forces, mercenaries and military equipment, as well as for securing the Ukrainian-Russian state border with continuous monitoring by the OSCE. Recent developments have again underlined the need for full and effective control by Ukraine of its borders. We call on Russia to respect this. We also call for full access for international humanitarian assistance to the separatist-controlled areas in accordance with fundamental international humanitarian principles.

The need to find a political, sustainable solution to the crisis is a matter of extreme urgency. We therefore support all efforts being made to de-escalate the situation, in particular in the Normandy format. The Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE Chairmanship must continue to play an essential role. We call on Russia to engage genuinely and constructively and use its influence with the separatists to ensure full implementation of the Minsk agreements. The Trilateral Contact Group needs to reconvene together with the other signatories to the Minsk agreements as soon as possible to make progress on the full implementation of these agreements. We welcome today's participation of Ambassador Tagliavini and we commend you, Ambassador, for your tireless efforts.

We recall our strong support to the efforts of the OSCE in Ukraine and thank SMM Chief Monitor Apakan and CPC Director Kobieracki for their briefings. The SMM continues to demonstrate its high value in providing impartial and factual information. We appreciate the SMM's thorough investigation of the tragic incident that led to 12 deaths and 17 wounded when a bus was hit by a missile on 13 January. We fully acknowledge the difficult and dangerous working environment for monitors in parts of eastern Ukraine. We commend the monitors for their dedication and courage. Their security and safety are of vital importance and we acknowledge the measures undertaken by the SMM to ensure their protection. We once again call on all parties to ensure free and safe access for monitors and UAVs throughout Ukraine, including in all parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts as well as along the Ukrainian-Russian state border.

Mr Chairman, yesterday the EU foreign ministers discussed the EU's relations with Russia. After the meeting, High Representative Mogherini outlined the views of the EU. She emphasised that the EU's relations with Russia can only change if and when commitments that were taken in Minsk are implemented. She underlined that any decision on sanctions will be based, first of all, on the non-recognition policy of the annexation of Crimea and on the full implementation of the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum and on the situation on the ground.

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 MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ 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.

* 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.