



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°883
Vienna, 9 May 2018**

EU Statement on the Security situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chairman, the EU and its Member States share concerns expressed on 3 May by Chief Monitor Apakan at the failure to fully implement the Minsk agreements and to halt violence along the line of contact, in particular in the wider area surrounding the Donetsk Filtration Station. Continued shelling is endangering lives and jeopardising the operation of the facility upon which more than 300,000 people on both sides of the contact line depend for drinking water. The security situation along the line of contact is highly volatile: in the period of 23-29 April the SMM recorded an increase in ceasefire violations and a three-fold increase in the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. Civilians continue to suffer from these negative developments. We therefore once again call on all sides to comply with their obligations on demining, to disengage and to withdraw heavy weapons, especially from populated areas, in order to ensure successful ceasefire implementation.

Mr. Chairperson, any restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement are unacceptable. In the week of 23-29 April, the SMM continued to face impediments to its work again mostly in non-government controlled areas: in addition to restrictions posed by the presence of mines and UXOs, the SMM was restricted in its freedom of movement in 12 out of 14 instances in non-government controlled areas. In addition, the SMM's access continued to be restricted for the tenth consecutive week at four border areas not under government control in Luhansk region. Furthermore, at a checkpoint near non-government controlled Kremynets, men in military-type clothing again restricted the SMM's freedom of movement three times. Since the beginning of 2018, the SMM's passage there has been restricted 27 times. Such systematic restrictions give rise to concerns as to reasons behind these attempts to hide facts on the ground. We remain concerned by the SMM reports of continued targeting SMM UAVs with small arms fire and signal interruptions. We urge all sides to respect the SMM's mandate which calls for full, safe and unhindered access

throughout Ukraine including along the Ukrainian-Russian border and on the Crimean peninsula, and to halt any targeting and obstructing of their technical equipment.

We reiterate our concerns over Russia's withdrawal from the JCCC. Due to this unilateral step, a number of important repair works in areas outside government control have been stalled for lack of security guarantees. We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to return to the JCCC. We also call on Russia and Ukraine to re-establish the functionality of the JCCC and to strengthen cooperation within its framework.

Mr. Chairman, on 8 May 2018, the 74th Russian Convoy entered Ukrainian territory at the Donetsk Border Crossing Point, as reported by the OSCE Observer Mission. We deeply regret that, once again, this happened without a full inspection by the Ukrainian border guards and in violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. This does little to allay concerns about the possible military nature of the transported cargo.

We call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs, to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern regarding information about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone. We call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn. All foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential.

We recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to recognise these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of 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 ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA 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.

