



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°820 Vienna, 18 May 2016**

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#### **EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine**

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The European Union and its Member States welcome the Foreign Minister's meeting in the Normandy Format held last week in Berlin and their efforts to advance a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. We call on the Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups to build on it by agreeing on concrete steps that advance full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Stabilisation of the ceasefire remains of critical importance for the security in eastern Ukraine, notably in view of the dire humanitarian situation on the ground. We regret that violence in eastern Ukraine continues. Equally, we are concerned about the presence and use of proscribed weapons in the security zone, as well as concentration of weapons outside permanent storage sites, beyond respective withdrawal lines. We deplore impediments to the SMM's monitoring and verification activities, which occur to a larger extent in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government, as such violations significantly impact the findings of the SMM.

We strongly condemn harassment, intimidation and threats towards the SMM, including inflammatory public remarks by some separatist leaders. Such actions are unacceptable and must stop immediately. The SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border.

We remain firm in calling on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments, in order to achieve a sustainable political settlement of the conflict, based on full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. 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. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We reiterate our concern regarding information about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone.

We recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to strictly observe 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 Crimea and Sevastopol by 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 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.