



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 791 Vienna, 3 June 2015

EU Statement on the Unusual Military Activities of the Russian Federation and the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States strongly support the work of the Trilateral Contact Group as laid out in the Minsk package and welcome the establishment of the four Working Groups under the TCG. We urge the sides to make a substantial progress with a view to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements based on OSCE principles and commitments and full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

At the same time, we remain deeply worried about the continuing significant ceasefire violations and their disastrous impact on the civilian population. We are appalled by information that again shelling of residential areas and socio-economic infrastructure has claimed further civilian lives. We express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and reiterate our strong condemnation of the shelling of residential areas and their use as firing positions in breach of international law.

While the pattern of violence in eastern Ukraine remains volatile and unpredictable the recent deliberate targeting of vital economic infrastructure by the Russia-backed separatist constitutes a new worrying development, as reported by the SMM. Furthermore, we note with deep concern incomplete compliance of the sides with regard to their commitments to withdraw all heavy weapons from the exclusion zone. Thus, such weapons continue to be used, concentrated and moved, in particular by the separatists, within areas that are not in compliance with the Minsk withdrawal lines. This is unacceptable. The SMM should be provided without further delay with the requested baseline information and access that would pave the way for effective and independent fulfilment of its monitoring and verification tasks in accordance with the Minsk agreements.

We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution of the conflict.

We are deeply concerned about the ever growing evidence of the longstanding direct involvement of active military personnel of the Russian Federation in the fighting in eastern Ukraine. Thereby, we condemn the presence of military personnel wearing Russian Armed Forces insignia and a vehicle with Russian number plates in the separatist-controlled village of Petrivske as observed by the SMM on 28 May. Against this background, we reiterate our 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.

The ceasefire must be respected and all provisions of the Minsk agreements must be fully and swiftly implemented, including substantial and effective OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. 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. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border with Russia remains essential, especially in the context of information about continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation.

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 as well as without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

Madam Chairperson, we take note of the Ukrainian request for an explanation of Russian unusual military activities, including numerous cases of violation of the Ukrainian airspace by Russian UAVs conducting reconnaissance flights, circulated under reference number CBM/UA/15/0048/F10/O.

We note in particular the shooting down of a 'Forpost' UAV by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the vicinity of Pesky on 20 May. We also note evidence that this UAV is owned and operated by the Russian military and entered into service recently.

This is why we consider Russia's reply under reference number CBM/RU/15/0066/F41/O to this, as well as to previous Ukrainian requests for explanation under the Vienna Document Chapter III, as being unsatisfactory and disappointing. We urge Russia to stop its continued violations of Ukrainian airspace and to contribute to restoring security, trust and confidence in the OSCE region by making full use, both in letter and spirit, of all relevant OSCE politico-military instruments.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to fully implement its policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We stand firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and call upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA^{*}, 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, 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.

^{**} Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.