



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°891  
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**EU Statement on the Security situation in and around Ukraine**

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Madame Chairperson, civilians in the conflict zone continue to suffer from shelling, the presence of mines and UXOs, as well as damage to essential infrastructure and civilian property. During the week of 20-26 August alone, the SMM corroborated reports of six civilian casualties, including two deaths and four injuries, on both sides of the contact line.

The EU and its Member States therefore welcome the back-to-school ceasefire that came into effect on 29 August and urge all sides to implement this recommitment in full. However, we are concerned that there have been no signs that the reduction in ceasefire violations has been accompanied by measures to de-escalate the situation on the ground - on the contrary the SMM routinely reports on newly observed mines, newly dug trenches and heavy weapons in proximity to the line of contact. We reiterate our call on all sides to disengage, withdraw heavy weapons and step up efforts on comprehensive mine action, in order to ensure a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire as an important step toward a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

Madame Chairperson, we and others have repeatedly asked the Russian delegation to explain the presence in Ukraine of sophisticated Russian military equipment and we have still not received an adequate answer. In this context we note that on the evening and night of 7-8 August an SMM long-range UAV observed two convoys of trucks entering Ukraine from the Russian Federation outside an official border crossing facility and without the consent of Ukrainian authorities. During the night of 4 September an SMM long-range UAV recorded another such convoy crossing the border into the Russian Federation. These incidents give rise to serious concerns regarding the nature of the cargo transported.

They also underline the role of the SMM's technological equipment, including UAVs, in a situation where the Russian Federation continues to oppose a substantial expansion of the OSCE Border Observation Mission and where Russia-backed armed formations

systematically deny the SMM access to certain areas of the international border. We are equally concerned about the presence of four distinct and highly sophisticated electronic warfare systems spotted for the first time by the SMM on 28 July near Chornukhyne, an area held by Russia-backed armed formations. One of these was identified as an anti-UAV system.

We continue to condemn any violation of the SMM mandate, which calls for full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine including along the Ukrainian-Russian border and on the Crimean peninsula. Any restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement – the vast majority of which continues to occur in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations – as well as targeting and obstruction of the SMM's technical equipment are unacceptable and must stop. We deplore in particular the 13 August incident in non-government controlled Smile where a member of the armed formations threatened an SMM patrol with his rifle.

Madame Chairperson, on 26 July and 23 August, the 77th and 78th Russian Convoys 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 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.