



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°836 Vienna, 23 November 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 remain deeply concerned by the spike in violence in both the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Last week marked the sad record of the highest number of ceasefire violations this year, as the security situation deteriorated along most of the contact line. We repeat our concern at the increased use of Minsk-proscribed weapons, including mortars, tank and artillery rounds, as well as multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS). We regret the devastating impact of the increased violence on civilians with yet another week passing with more lost lives and injured civilians. The destruction and damage to houses and other essential infrastructure including school buildings, gas pipelines and electricity lines, is particularly worrying with winter approaching. This negative trend was accompanied by lack of progress on withdrawal of weapons and stalemate with regard to disengagement as well as continued restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement and impediments to the SMM's work.

We urge the sides to fully adhere to the ceasefire, verifiably disengage and withdraw Minsk-proscribed weapons so that the negative trend of the last few weeks can be reversed. These are necessary steps in order to ensure a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

We once again underline that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, in particular to the disengagement areas and also along the Ukrainian-Russian State border. We stress the important role of the JCCC to assist in ensuring the security of the SMM. The lack of a robust rapid response by the JCCC to this end is a matter of continued concern.

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, 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 and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, 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.