



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°823 Vienna, 15 June 2016

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States follow with great concern the continuing rise in violence in eastern Ukraine towards the level of ceasefire violations recorded before the end of April 2016, when the sides renewed their commitment to adhere to the ceasefire as of 1 May. We condemn the use of weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements, including mortars and artillery. The fact that the number of explosions caused by such weapons is close to the peak of escalation noted before Easter further adds to our concerns, as well as the large amount of weapons missing from storage sites and holding areas and the presence of large number of weapons in violation of the withdrawal lines. We deplore moves of positions closer to the contact line, as was observed by the SMM on 5 June near Horlivka, where a separatist-controlled checkpoint had moved forward 900 m to the north-west. Such moves constitute a violation of the Minsk agreements and have led in the past to increases in ceasefire violations. We urge all sides to take immediate steps to disengage, strictly adhere to the ceasefire and ensure an unconditional and verifiable withdrawal of all Minsk-regulated weapons. In this context, we welcome the agreement reached within the TCG on 10 June that a full and objective investigation of the ceasefire violations along the line of contact is needed which is expected to be discussed at the TCG meeting today with the participation of the SMM and the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination. We expect concrete progress on the ground.

We deplore ongoing obstructions of the SMM's work. Over the last three weeks the Mission's remote monitoring capacity has been seriously undermined with the two remaining long-range UAVs destroyed over the separatist-controlled territory and the disruption by separatists of the power supply for the SMM's cameras in Donetsk city. We take note of the fact that according to the SMM report of yesterday, the power supply of the SMM repeater in Donetsk city has been reconnected. In addition to

these limitations, the SMM continues facing restrictions to its freedom of movement, overwhelmingly in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government. Such steps are an expression of disregard for the SMM's mandate, seriously impede the monitoring function of the SMM and represent a violation of the Minsk agreements. We reiterate our firm position that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian State border and to the illegally annexed Crimea. We recall the recent agreements in the Normandy format to this end and call on the sides to ensure this is implemented in practice, and underline Russia's responsibility in this regard.

We remain firm in calling on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments, including ensuring the ceasefire, as well as those related to agreeing on the modalities of local elections in certain parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR, 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 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.