



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°842 Vienna, 25 January 2017

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States remain deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in eastern Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman, yet another week has passed with increased violence in the conflict area. We very much regret that in the period of 9 – 15 January, the SMM registered the third-highest level in the past year of the use of weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements and the violence was at a level not seen since the weeks prior to the 24 December renewed commitment to the ceasefire. This worrying trend was again accompanied by ongoing restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement and impediments to its work, stalemate in the disengagement process and lack of action by the JCCC. Civilians remain the ultimate victims of this negative trend while suffering from shelling, presence of mines and UXOs, as well as destruction to their homes and essential infrastructure. We once again urge the sides to fully adhere to the ceasefire, verifiably disengage and withdraw Minsk-proscribed weapons. These are necessary steps in order to ensure a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments, as was also highlighted last week in this hall by the SMM Chief Monitor Ambassador Apakan and the CiO Special Representative Ambassador Sajdik when addressing the Permanent Council.

Furthermore, 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. With regard to the latter, we note that the SMM is able to conduct only very limited monitoring. During the period of 9 - 15 January, the SMM was able to visit the border in areas not controlled by the Government only ten times, and to conduct only short visits - because of poor road conditions, adverse weather, limited daylight hours and long distance. The fact, that the monitors have to pass

several check points before reaching the border further adds to the SMM's constraints with regard to proper border monitoring. We emphasize the need for an extension of the mandate of the "Observer Mission at the Russian Federation Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk" and call on participating States not to block an extension for reasons not connected with the subject.

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. In this context, we would like to draw attention of this Forum to the SMM report of 20 January, according to which the SMM again observed a mobile jamming communication system assessed as R-330ZH "Zhitel" in the area not controlled by the Ukrainian Government. This highly sophisticated military system is only available in the Russian arsenal. We are therefore requesting the delegation of the Russian Federation to explain its presence in separatist-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine.

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, 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.