



EUROPEAN UNION

Joint FSC – PC Meeting No. 60 Vienna, 13 July 2015

EU Statement in reply to the SMM Chief Monitor Apakan

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome SMM Chief Monitor Apakan to this joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council. We remain fully supportive of the SMM's impartial and objective reporting and its efforts to de-escalate the crisis in and around Ukraine.

Mr Chairperson, today's meeting comes at a critical point in time. Five months after the ceasefire agreed in Minsk in February we continue to receive daily SMM reports on ceasefire violations and movements of heavy weapons and tanks in violation of the Minsk agreements. We note the SMM's assessment that the ongoing clashes have not translated into territorial gains for either side, but have caused further deaths of civilians and fighters of both sides and massive destruction to property and infrastructure with the net result of further suffering for the civilian population. We also note from the SMM's reporting that the independently compiled logs of representatives at the JCCC headquarters suggest that most of the time separatist forces are 'responsible for the majority of ceasefire violations'.

We commend the efforts of the SMM to facilitate local ceasefires and demilitarisation on the ground, most recently in Shyrokyne and between Maiorsk and Horlivka. We also commend the efforts of the SMM Chief Monitor and his deputy as coordinators of the working group on security under the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, Russia, and the OSCE Chairmanship. We call on all sides to strengthen their efforts and to show the necessary political will to allow for concrete results in all working groups.

We call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We also expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet their Minsk commitments in full. In this context, we recall the decision by the

European Council to extend the EU restrictive measures, in view of Russia's destabilising role in eastern Ukraine.

The SMM must be allowed to fulfil its mandate and implement its tasks under the Minsk agreements. We are therefore deeply concerned that the SMM's access continues to be restricted despite repeated commitments to ensure the freedom of movement of the SMM made by all sides. We note in particular that access remains fully or partly restricted in large swaths of separatist-controlled territory. We call on all sides to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for SMM monitors and UAVs to all parts of Ukraine, including to the Crimean peninsula and along the border with Russia. We would welcome an assessment of the impact of jamming and other threats to the operation of SMM UAVs. We once again call on all parties to provide the SMM with the full baseline information that would allow for verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

We welcome the SMM's recent thematic reports on gender and freedom of movement to and from Crimea. The report on gender is an important reminder of the need to involve women in conflict prevention and resolution and we fully support the Mission's efforts on gender related monitoring activities. The freedom of movement report clearly underscores the urgent need of access for the SMM to the Crimean peninsula in order to enable monitoring of the alarming human rights situation there.

Mr Chairperson, the crisis in and around Ukraine has strongly reminded us of the significant role the Vienna Document and its broad set of CSBMs could play not only in confidence-building but also in early warning and risk reduction, if duly implemented. Therefore we once again urge the Russian Federation to respond to the repeated questions put under the Vienna Document Chapter III and enter into a constructive dialogue. We also urge all parties to make full use of all other instruments pertaining to the OSCE politico-military dimension of security as well as for the FSC itself as a platform for cooperative security and dialogue.

That is why we see the full implementation, updating and modernisation of the existing OSCE commitments in the politico-military area, based on founding OSCE principles and agreed norms, as a priority task. We reiterate that such process should reflect the experience and lessons learned during the Ukraine crisis. Thus, we support discussions aimed at identifying ways to improve specific provisions of the

Vienna Document in the light of the crisis in and around Ukraine and remain ready to take an active part in the discussions within a dedicated format.

Furthermore, the FSC can play an important role, not only in reviewing the implementation of the OSCE CAC and CSBM commitments, but also in contributing to relevant politico-military activities of the OSCE field operations in accordance with their respective mandates and in line with the 2001 Bucharest MC Decision. We are particularly grateful to the SMM Chief Monitor for his presentation today as we believe that such briefings would better enable the FSC to discuss and adopt, if appropriate, tailor made measures to support ongoing activities, including of the field missions, in conflict prevention, risk reduction and crisis management.

Mr Chairperson, the EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We once again urge Russia to recognise by acts these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

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 LIECHTENSTEIN, 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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.