



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 753 Vienna, 7 May 2014

EU Statement on Russian Unusual Military Activities and the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States took note of the reports on Vienna Document verification activities in Ukraine, as well of the statement by Ukraine on the worrying security situation and continuing unusual Russian military activities. We would also like to refer to our statement on the same subject delivered at the Joint FSC PC meeting on 30 April 2014.

But first and foremost, we would like to express our deep sorrow for the many deaths and injured in the recent events in Odessa and convey sincere condolences to the families of all those victims of blind violence. The facts which led to this tragic loss of so many human lives must now be established in an independent investigation and those responsible for these criminal acts brought to justice. The EU urges everyone to exercise utmost restraint and not to exploit this tragedy to fuel more hatred, division and senseless violence.

Returning to the politico-military situation around Ukraine, we are compelled to reiterate our dissatisfaction with the repeated and consistent refusal of the Russian Federation to cooperate in good faith on the basis of its OSCE politico-military commitments, with a view to dispelling serious and legitimate security concerns over its unusual military activities along the border with Ukraine and in Crimea. We remain of the firm opinion that all relevant politico-military tools and settings, including Joint FSC PC meetings, should be used to bring about immediate de-escalation of the situation.

In this context, we reiterate our demand to the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the areas bordering Ukraine and immediately revoke the mandate of the Federation Council to use military force on Ukrainian soil.

Furthermore, we continue to urge the Russian Federation to demonstrate the highest standards of military transparency. There are no other multilaterally agreed mechanisms to verify military activities and facts on the ground; for example we would wish to confirm the supposed withdrawal of Russian troops from the borders that was recently published on the Ministry of Defence

website. In this respect, we continue to urge the Russian Federation to facilitate verification as we remain wholly unconvinced by the arguments put forward to reject the suggestion for additional Vienna Document visits and inspections.

We feel that there is much for the Russian Federation to do in order to unequivocally demonstrate its application, not only in letter but also in spirit, of the broad range of confidence- and security-building and conventional arms control commitments that could begin to restore trust and confidence. In addition to voluntary verification measures, this includes exercising strict restraint in carrying out military activities in the areas bordering Ukraine and providing verifiable information about on-going and planned military activities in those areas, even if they do not fall under the provisions of the Vienna Document. In the same vein, we encourage all participating States to make full use of all relevant OSCE politico-military instruments and to further support continued Vienna Document activities.

The European Union welcomes the release of all members of the unarmed OSCE Vienna Document inspection mission from Germany, Denmark, Poland, Sweden, and the Czech Republic as well as their Ukrainian escort team who had altogether been held hostage in Sloviansk. We are grateful to all those who have contributed to this positive development, in particular the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. This should now be followed by the release of all other hostages held by illegal armed groups in Eastern Ukraine.

The European Union reiterates its strong support for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon the Russian Federation to do so as well. We also reiterate our condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and will not recognise it.

We once again urge the Russian Federation to immediately commence meaningful and constructive dialogue on its unusual military activities and use all appropriate politico-military tools to significantly de-escalate tension and reduce the grave risk of miscalculation.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association country NORWAY, member 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 Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

** Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.