

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 799
Vienna, 14 October 2015**

**EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around
Ukraine**

The European Union and its Member States welcome the agreements of the Normandy Format leaders in Paris on 2 October on the continued implementation of the Minsk agreements, especially concerning the withdrawal of weapons and its verification, access for SMM to all parts of the conflict zone, enhanced access for humanitarian assistance as well as concerning the political process. Due compliance will represent an important step towards full implementation of the Minsk agreements in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

In this context, the agreement on the withdrawal of tanks, artillery up to 100 mm and mortars up to 120 mm in eastern Ukraine reached on 29 September is an important positive step forward. The withdrawal would strengthen the ceasefire, which has been largely holding since 1 September 2015 despite the fragile security situation, and contribute to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements in full respect of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

We welcome steps taken to begin the withdrawal process and to provide the SMM with some baseline information in order to make verification possible. This should be accompanied without delay by the full and unconditional withdrawal of all heavy weapons in accordance with the Minsk Package of Measures, which will also have to be verified by the SMM.

To this end, it is essential that the SMM is granted free and unhindered access to all areas and weapon storage points and that it receives all necessary baseline information. We strongly support efforts to further enhance the capacity of the SMM and we reiterate that its mandate covers the whole of Ukraine, including the Crimean peninsula. Despite some progress, the SMM monitors and UAVs still face significant restrictions, particularly in separatist-held areas close to the border with Russia. This is unacceptable. We remain concerned by the continued jamming of the SMM UAVs and the presence of a R330ZH Zhitel jamming communication station in separatist-controlled area, which was confirmed by SMM's Deputy Chief on 31 August.

We remain firm in our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and to honour their commitments in full. The ceasefire must be respected in full, all heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We recall our concern about the reports regarding continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in separatist-controlled areas. In this context, we are distressed by reports from the SMM on the concentration of tanks and multiple rocket systems in separatist-held areas. As mentioned in the SMM daily report of 28 September, the SMM observed on 25 September, at a separatist-controlled training area in Kruhlyk, a heavy multiple launch thermobaric rocket system TOS-1 Buratino. This weapon system, which spreads and ignites a flammable liquid over its target, causes indiscriminate and disastrous damage. The Buratino is produced in Russia and has never been exported to Ukraine. We are requesting the delegation of the Russian Federation to explain the presence of the TOS-1 Buratino in this training area. We also recall that the Russian Federation has not provided any answers yet on the repeated questions about the presence of a Zhitel jamming communication system in separatist-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine.

We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continued to enter Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

Mr Chairman, we recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls 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*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, 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.