



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1107
Vienna, 7 July 2016**

**EU statement on “Russia’s Ongoing Aggression against
Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea”**

The EU remains deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in eastern Ukraine. The overall situation remains tense and unpredictable, heavy fighting continues in strategic hot spots, and the SMM continues to face obstruction, particularly in separatist-held areas. We reiterate our call on all sides to immediately disengage, strictly adhere to the ceasefire, unconditionally and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-regulated weapons and ensure the SMM full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian State border. These are necessary steps in order to move towards a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

We welcome progress made on the principles and priority areas for disengagement, but note that a final agreement has yet to be reached, let alone implemented. We urge the sides to agree on and carry out a full disengagement without further delay and we expect substantial progress on the ground.

In the absence of this, civilian casualties will continue to rise and the humanitarian plight will, as just explained by Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović, worsen. Residential areas on both sides of the contact line continue to be shelled with artillery. We deplore such indiscriminate shelling, and we condemn any positioning of military formations near residential areas, such as the position spotted by the SMM near separatist-held Makiivka.

We are concerned about the loss of an SMM mid-range UAV last week while it was flying over separatist-held areas. Such incidents must be thoroughly investigated and highlight yet again the need for full SMM access. We look forward to receiving further information on this and previous incidents, and stress that those responsible must be

held accountability. The debris of the downed SMM UAVs over separatist held territories must be returned to the SMM without delay.

We again call on the sides in the Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups to agree on steps toward the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. This includes further measures to enhance the security situation and agreeing on modalities of holding the local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. We recall our firm position that established conditions for ODIHR monitoring, including ensuring security and access, must be met. We also reiterate our call on the sides to agree on the further exchange of prisoners and detainees.

We remain firm in our 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 yet again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet those commitments in full. Moreover, we again call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists. 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 deep concern about information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in separatist-held areas. The duration of the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. Accordingly, on 1 July, the European Council prolonged the economic sanctions until 31 January 2017.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to recognise 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 to 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.