



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 808 Vienna, 20 January 2016**

---

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

---

The European Union and its Member States remain deeply concerned about the volatile and tense situation in eastern Ukraine. We regret that ceasefire violations continued despite an agreement reached on 22 December, whereby all sides decided to comply with the existing ceasefire agreement during the holiday period, as well as the failure to comply with the agreement on a reinforced ceasefire reached on 13 January. We note with concern in particular SMM reports about cases of multiple launch rocket systems shelling as well as usage of mortars in several locations. We once again underline the need to consolidate the ceasefire and to fully implement the Minsk agreements, in order to achieve a sustainable political settlement of the conflict, based on full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

We urge all sides to abide by their commitments in accordance with the Addendum on withdrawal of smaller calibre weapons. Likewise, we continue to urge for full and unconditional withdrawal of heavy weapons in accordance with the Minsk Package of Measures, accompanied by an efficient verification mechanism. We remain concerned about the presence and movement of proscribed weapons in the security zone and about their concentration beyond the withdrawal lines and therefore beyond the verification process as reported by the SMM.

We welcome the recent opening of new Forward Patrol Bases in Krasnoarmiisk, Svitlodarsk and Stanytsia Luhanska which enable the SMM to enhance its monitoring.

We deplore any attempts to restrict the freedom of movement of the SMM in particular in separatist-controlled areas, as well as instances of jamming and shooting at SMM UAVs. We are deeply concerned by the recent cases of intimidation of SMM monitors and even violent behaviour towards them in areas controlled by Russia-backed separatists. Most recently SMM monitors were exposed to small-arms fire when facilitating the restoration of critical infrastructure near Marinka. This incident came just few days after SMM monitors in non-government-controlled Horlivka were removed from their vehicles and forced to the ground at

gunpoint. These cases are acts of disregard not only for the lives and safety of SMM monitors but also for the mission and its mandate and are entirely unacceptable.

We welcome SMM's continued focus on the prioritized areas for demining work following the expanded agreement at the security working group of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk. However, we regret that due to firing incidents and persistent insecurity in those areas, the efforts of humanitarian assistance actors were obstructed and an atmosphere of mistrust and unease was created. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about the appearance of newly laid mines and minefields as observed by the SMM. We call on all sides to adhere to agreements reached at political level in order to allow for progress on the ground.

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

Madame Chairperson, we remain firm in our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and to honour their commitments. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and also again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their commitments. The ceasefire must be respected. All heavy 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 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, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members 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 Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.