



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1159  
Vienna, 5 October 2017**

---

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

---

The security situation along the line of contact remains highly unpredictable despite the school ceasefire and subsequent overall decrease in ceasefire violations. However, ceasefire violations involving heavy weapons continue and we remain concerned that the SMM has yet again observed indications of heightened training activity in non-government-controlled areas, involving pieces of artillery and tanks. We again call on all sides to take immediate steps to ensure full respect of the ceasefire, the withdrawal of all Minsk-proscribed weapons, complete disengagement, full, safe and unhindered SMM access – including along the Ukrainian-Russian border – and full humanitarian access in line with international humanitarian law and principles. These are important steps toward a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these fundamental principles must be restored.

SMM monitors have been threatened directly 13 times this year – primarily in non-government-controlled areas – which is a significant increase compared to last year. The EU is alarmed by this disturbing trend. Without proper and unimpeded monitoring by the SMM, there cannot be a verified improvement of the security situation, which is the basis for progress on the political track of the peace process. The safety and security of the SMM must be a top priority for all OSCE participating States and the responsibility for it lies with those in effective control of the area in which the SMM operates. We urge Russia to exercise its influence over the separatists it backs to put an end to the restrictions and intimidation. Accountability must be ensured.

We condemn that so-called “humanitarian convoys” from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory; on 28 September 2017, the sixty-seventh Russian convoy

arrived at the Donetsk Border Crossing Point. This occurs without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed. The Minsk agreements foresee that humanitarian aid be delivered through an international mechanism.

We remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility and to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. We again call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists, and we remain deeply concerned 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.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, 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 European Union will remain committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures.

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 and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.