



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1037 Vienna, 29 January 2015

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#### **EU Statement on Russia's Ongoing Aggression against Ukraine and Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments**

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The European Union remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine. We once again strongly condemn the killing of civilians during the indiscriminate shelling of Mariupol on 24 January. We also condemn the recent attacks on Debaltseve and other locations along the so-called 'line of contact'. The SMM reports point to a rapid increase of ceasefire violations involving the use of heavy weaponry in the recent days. We note evidence of continued and growing support given to the separatists by Russia, including by deploying illegal and foreign forces, mercenaries and military equipment. This underlines Russia's responsibility. Those responsible for the escalation must stop their hostile actions and fully implement their commitments under the Minsk agreements. We call in particular for full adherence to the ceasefire, withdrawal of illegal and foreign forces, mercenaries and military equipment, as well as securing the Ukrainian-Russian state border with continuous monitoring by the OSCE.

We call notably on the Russian Federation to condemn the separatists' actions. Public statements distorting the reality on the ground, inciting hatred and further violence, as well as the public humiliation of prisoners in violation of international law will not lead to the badly needed de-escalation. The perpetrators of such acts of public humiliation of prisoners should be brought to justice.

The European Union will actively support all diplomatic efforts – in particular in the Normandy Format – conducive to creating a new political impetus and will engage further as necessary. These efforts should be undertaken in good faith and lead to meaningful results. Full implementation of the Minsk agreements as the basis

for a sustainable political solution to the conflict, respecting Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, must remain the focus of such talks.

The Trilateral Contact Group of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE Chairmanship must continue to play an essential role. The Trilateral Contact Group and the other two signatories of the Minsk agreements should meet without further delay and make progress in the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We recall the European Council conclusions of 18 December 2014, where we said that "the EU will stay the course" and that we are "ready to take further steps if necessary." In view of the worsening situation the EU Heads of State or Government have asked the Foreign Affairs Council to meet this afternoon to assess the situation and consider any appropriate action, in particular on further restrictive measures, aiming at a swift and comprehensive implementation of Minsk agreements.

We reiterate our strong support for the impartial work of the SMM since its establishment. We call on all sides to ensure safe and free access for the SMM. The SMM's objective and comprehensive reporting on the indiscriminate attack on Mariupol provides another reminder of the value of the mission's work. We urge all participating States to refrain from calling the impartiality of the SMM into doubt. We hope progress will soon be made in the implementation of the SMM concept on border monitoring as well as regarding expansion of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian border checkpoints.

The humanitarian situation on the ground as a result of Russia's de-stabilisation of the east is a matter of increasing concern. The EU remains committed to support the most vulnerable population affected by the conflict. In this respect, the Commission together with the Member States have mobilised additional funding and in-kind assistance to cover most urgent needs, as communicated during the recent visit of Commissioner Stylianides to Ukraine. So far, the EU's humanitarian and early recovery assistance amounts to a total of 95 million Euros. We call on

all parties to support and facilitate access for national and international humanitarian aid in accordance with international humanitarian principles.

Mr Chairman, we remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Crimea. We join the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in condemning the raid by masked forces in Crimea on the Crimean television station ATR on 26 January. This represents the most recent act of persecution and intimidation of the Crimean Tatar community and another attempt to limit freedom of expression and media on the peninsula. In this context, we reiterate our call on all parties to provide the High Commissioner on National Minorities and international human rights actors with full, free and unrestricted access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We once again urge Russia to recognise by acts these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute 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\*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, 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.

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