



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the Unusual Military Activities of the Russian Federation and the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States reiterate our support to the full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures as well as the diplomatic efforts undertaken within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group to this end.

At the same time, we are gravely concerned about the continued ceasefire violations, especially around Donetsk airport and Shyrokyne, and about the suffering inflicted on civilians who remain in the area. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory would constitute a violation of the Minsk agreements and will seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution of the conflict.

We therefore strongly urge all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and, in particular to strictly respect the ceasefire and conclude without delay the withdrawal of heavy weapons. We welcome the call of the Normandy format foreign ministers to include weapons with a calibre of less than 100 mm and tanks of all types among those that should be withdrawn.

Furthermore, foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries must be withdrawn from the territory of Ukraine as stipulated in the Minsk package. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard.

Only the full implementation of the Minsk agreements offers a way forward to a sustainable political solution to the crisis. We underline all parties' responsibilities to this end and repeat our call on Russia to use its influence over the separatists to fully implement their commitments. We recall the European Council Conclusions of 19-20 March in all their elements, in particular those linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We remain concerned that the SMM has still not received the baseline information that would allow for systematic verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons nor does it enjoy free and unhindered access. SMM must be allowed to fulfil its mandate and implement its tasks under the Minsk agreements.

We continue to call for immediate, substantial and effective OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over this border remains essential.

In this context, we recall that the Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory, 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.

We take note of the Ukrainian request for an explanation of Russian unusual military activities along the border with Ukraine, including several cases of violation of the Ukrainian airspace, circulated on 16 April under reference number CBM/UA/15/0032/F10/O. We also note the observations made in this respect in the last weekly reports by the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk.

We consider the Russian Federation's reply under reference number CBM/RU/14/0052/F41/O to this, as well as to previous Ukrainian requests for explanation under the Vienna Document Chapter III, as being unsatisfactory and not conducive to helping to restore security, trust and confidence in the OSCE region through the full use, both in letter and spirit, of all relevant OSCE politico-military instruments.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to fully implement its policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We stand firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and call upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.