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Vienna, 8 December 2017

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TROIKA STATEMENT ON THE THE CRISIS IN AND AROUND UKRAINE

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of Germany, Austria and Italy, the Troika of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), are deeply concerned about the crisis in and around Ukraine, particularly by the continued fighting and the use of heavy weapons which have severe negative consequences for the security of the local population in eastern Ukraine. We are also concerned about the wider impact of the crisis on stability and cooperation in Europe and our commonly agreed principles and commitments. We call for implementation of a durable and verifiable ceasefire and a new impetus to intensify efforts to resolve the conflict.
2. We would have preferred to reach consensus on a joint declaration on the OSCE's response to the crisis in and around Ukraine. Due to disagreement, in particular, over a reference to the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine and the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, this was not possible again this year. Nevertheless, we, together with nearly all participating States reaffirm our full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and call on the sides to accelerate the disengagement process, demining and withdrawal of heavy weapons, and to agree on new disengagement areas. We also stress the importance of the full, swift and comprehensive implementation of the Minsk agreements in their entirety.
3. Like all participating States we continue to have the gravest concerns about the situation on the ground. We deplore the suffering of civilians – particularly children and the elderly – and the grave humanitarian, economic and environmental impact of the crisis. We underline the urgent need to address pressing humanitarian issues, including by enabling access by international humanitarian organizations to the entire territory of Ukraine.
4. We call for the immediate release and exchange of all hostages and unlawfully detained persons, based on the principle of “all for all”, in accordance with the Minsk agreements. We condemn the indiscriminate use of mines and their devastating impact on civilians and the



the threat they pose to SMM patrols. We, like most participating States, urge the sides to enhance their efforts to clear mines, explosive devices and unexploded ordnance, and to refrain from laying additional mines and increase mine awareness. We are concerned by cease-fire violations in the vicinity of critical infrastructure. We call on the sides to continue to assist the SMM to enable local cease-fires, particularly for the repair of critical infrastructure, and to establish safety zones around such installations. We need greater efforts to reduce the risk of ecological and humanitarian disasters in the region. We urge the sides to enhance connectivity, and to repeal unilateral steps that run counter to the spirit of the Minsk Agreements.

5. The OSCE will continue to work towards a peaceful solution of the crisis, fully committed to upholding the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and all other OSCE principles and commitments to which we have all agreed. We support the diplomatic efforts in the Normandy format, and welcome close cooperation between the Chairmanship, Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), and the members of the Normandy Group.
6. Like all participating States, we recognize the central role of the TCG and its working groups in facilitating the practical implementation of the Minsk agreements and we reiterate our full support for the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Martin Sajdik, and the co-ordinators of the four working groups. We appreciate the good offices provided by Belarus in hosting the meetings.
7. Despite political differences, there is overwhelming support for the work of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), and appreciation to its monitors who are operating in a challenging environment under the able, almost four-year-long leadership of Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan.
8. As demonstrated in the declaration of support for the SMM adopted by the Permanent Council on 27 April 2017, all participating States lament the death of paramedic Joseph Stone and the injuries suffered by two other monitors while on patrol with the SMM on 23 April 2017. We welcome the findings of the investigations into this tragic incident and the resulting enhanced efforts to improve the security of the monitors.
9. All participating States have agreed that the SMM is mandated to have safe and secure access throughout Ukraine and have called for this to be fully respected. We condemn any threats against SMM monitors and damage of OSCE assets.



10. Following the visits by the CiO to the region and the talks with the local population most affected, the need for more and enhanced monitoring by the SMM became apparent. We welcome the decision by all participating States to adopt the budget of the SMM and applaud the work that the SMM has done this year to expand its footprint, increase the number of monitors, and enhance the use of technology. We call on the SMM to continue to enhance efforts in monitoring and supporting the implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments. In this regard, we also welcome the relevant activities of the OSCE executive structures, including the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.
11. We acknowledge the role played by the OSCE Observer Mission to two Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk, and call for further dialogue on how to enhance monitoring at the Ukrainian/Russian state border.
12. We support establishing closer cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations with the aim to contribute to fostering the peaceful resolution of the crisis in and around Ukraine.